

**POLITICAL IDENTITY
REPERTOIRES OF SOUTH AFRICA'S
PROFESSIONAL BLACK MIDDLE
CLASS**

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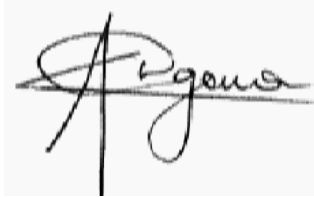
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Date: 14 September 2015

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Ngwenya', is written over a horizontal line.

28/09/2015 of date

Dedication

Kianga Nomalanga Oratilwe Ngoma,

Kia, my princess, my angel.

You who are Mother of the Sun.

You who are sunrays.

You, my baby, chosen and loved by God.

Your light shines.

I love you the mostest.

Mommy.

The Queen.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for financial support.

I dedicate this to everyone who knows me!

Special shout out to Roger my supervisor, Tshepo Ngoma my mom, Tumi Diseko and Tebogo Ngoma my fans and supporters.

And not forgetting the vibrant black middle class participants in this study, you made me smarter and cracked me up!

Abstract

This study explored the socio-political capacity and agency of the professional Black middle class (BMC). It examined how Black professionals construct their professional and socio-political identities and the relationships therein.

It finds that for the Black middle class race is a stronger identity marker than class, which affects its support and attitudes towards the African National Congress. Race, residence, intra-racial inequality function as the factors through which the BMC rejects a middle class identity. At the same time, education, income and affordability form the variables of middle class location for many of the BMC members. The rejection of a middle class identity enables it to maintain class unity with the poor and working class. In this way, the study found that these were the major markers of identity for the middle class.

This study also found that while the apartheid-times BMC support for the liberation movement and the ANC was never unanimous or unambiguous, in the post-1994 era the ANC has consolidated BMC support. However, 20 years into democracy, this support is beginning to fragment. The primary reasons are the politicisation of state resources and workplaces, and widespread unfettered corruption. Second, the study finds that the need to consolidate middle class position, Black tax and debt sustains the BMC's support for the ANC. The BMC support for the ANC is instrumental and sustained by its precarious class position of asset deficit, Black tax and debt. More crucially the perpetuation of racial economic exclusion or the floating colour bar, particularly within the corporate sector reinforces its support for the ANC – as it seeks this government party to improve the socio-economic conditions in the country. This suggests the socio-political character of the upper and middle class is maturing, much more complicated and consolidating democracy in particular ways to the South African political economy. It follows the Rueschmeryian analysis of political character of the BMC.

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Acronyms

ACPB	African Corporate Petty Bourgeoisie
BA	Black Advancement
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BMC	Black middle class
CA	Chartered Accountant
CPB	Corporate Petty Bourgeoisie
CT	Cape Town
DA	Democratic Alliance
EE	Employment Equity
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EL	East London
FETC	Further Education and Training Colleges
FG	Focus Group
GP	Gauteng
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IT	Information Technology
JHB	Johannesburg
NUM	National
PSFs	Professional Service Firms
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SA	South Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TV	Television
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDM	United Democratic Front
VAP	Voting age population

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There is no evidence that in recent years such a sizeable Black middle class is emerging and neither is there reason to believe that it will emerge in the future. ... Even though the Black middle class is growing quite rapidly it does so from a very small base and in the context of a large number of Black unemployed. This in itself would be sufficient to suggest that if the Black middle class continues to grow at the same rate it is unlikely to become a numerous or very influential group in South African society (Meth, 1983:173).

1.1 Introduction & contextual background

The post-liberation Black middle class (BMC) has significantly expanded alongside millions of the working class, the poor and unemployed. Despite its numeric insignificance, the social, economic and political role of the Black middle class, its “wealth, patterns of consumption, style of life, and moderating or revolutionary tendencies,” has long held the interest of the academic community (Kuper, 1965: ix). But, throughout South Africa’s modern history, various scholars have questioned the quality of this interest (Kuper, 1965; Nzimande, 1986; Southall, 2014). Kuper, for instance, lamented the exoticising interest imposed on this class, arguing that it often lacked analytical depth, a charge that was endorsed by Southall almost fifty years later. Kuper protested against the proclivity of academics for exoticising the Black middle class of the time; “as if the emergence of the strata differentiated from a general mass of impoverished and poorly educated African workers were a sport of evolution” *ibid*. In the 1980s Nzimande observed “very little work has been done to understand the social and political significance of the Black middle class.” Together these criticisms suggest a lack of maturation of the South African social science treatment of the subject.

Southall (2014) observes that journalists and advertisers in South Africa have paid greater attention to the Black middle class than academics. So that to date, the predominant perspective pertains to the strata’s buying or consumption power

(Southall, 2014). The prevalence of this understanding is evident in the media images that are captured and reflected back to society as a whole: the big house, the expensive cars, the designer clothes; shoes and cellphones. Importantly, images reflect excessive indulgences of expensive alcohol and dining. These are the *Black diamonds* (UCT, 2012) who are “young and driving a BMW” (Carrol, 2004 cited in Mabandla, 2012:1). Acclaimed African authors have even dedicated characters to them: ‘Lankunle’ in Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion and the Jewel* and *Black Diamonds* by Zakes Mda.

This study aims to take an in-depth look at the class, professional and political attitudes of Black managers, higher professionals and entrepreneurs. It is guided, firstly by the hope of improving our understanding; secondly and more importantly, hopes to escape the recent tendency to pathologise the new Black middle class. The rest of this chapter discusses the political and economic discourses surrounding the Black middle class and closes by outlining the thesis structure.

1.2 Definitional approaches

While the use of racial categories in South Africa has contentious history, for the purposes of this study, I use the term ‘Black’ to refer only to those that were categorized as African or Black-African under apartheid law, therefore excluding population groups currently referred to as Coloured, Indian and Chinese. Given that I am also referring to a population that encompasses many nationalities, I capitalize the ‘b’ in Black. Pre-liberation studies of class typically refer to the Black middle class as either the ‘African bourgeoisie,’ ‘African elite’ or ‘African middle class.’ These terms also refer to the same population group as explained. In order to maintain connections with this literature, I use ‘Black’ and ‘African’ interchangeably or simultaneously. The middle class herein are entrepreneurs, managers and professionals. The ‘old BMC’ refers the BMC created during apartheid and ‘new BMC’ to post-liberation created. Furthermore, the terms post-apartheid and post-liberation indicate the period after 1994.

I recognise that sociological research on professions defines professionalization as the process that occupations undergo to achieve the status of a profession (Evetts, 2014:34). However, I use the term to describe the increase in the number of Black

people becoming educated, obtaining qualifications and credentials and entering into recognised professions.

1.3 BMC formation: the ANC, EE & BEE discourse

Scholars' explanations of class formation in the post-liberation era rest heavily upon what Lebelo (1990) once called "legislative enactments and administrative fiat" that have either acted to inhibit, assist or revitalize the emergence, growth and development of the new BMC. The enactment of the Black Economic Empowerment Acts (BEE, 2003; BBBEE, 2007) and the Employment Equity Act (EE, 1998) by the African National Congress's (ANC) government is pervasively held as responsible for the formation of the new BMC. This has been argued by authors such as: Mattes, 2014; Modisha, 2006; Rivero, du Toit & Kotze 2003; Southall, 2004; Schlemmer, 2005; Seekings, 2010; Visagie, 2011; Alexander, Ceruti, Motseke, Phadi & Wale, 2013 and UCT, 2014. Historically, racialised colonial and apartheid state laws stunted the development of a numerically significant Black middle class, but facilitated that of a white middle class (Lebelo, 1990; Southall, 2014). Notably, white middle class formation was - first for English speaking whites, and later for Afrikaners - facilitated through the expansion of middle class occupations within the apartheid state bureaucracy (Bonnin & Ruggunan, 2013:1). This has been reversed as today 40% of skilled Africans work in government compared to just 14% of whites (UCT, 2012).

This mode of BMC expansion has engendered the pervasive argument that the ANC's redistributive policies have directly, if not singularly, created the new BMC. The rhetoric goes:

- because "... the ANC sees itself as the vehicle of transformation of the political economy towards a goal of equity and growth... (Southall, 2005:72) ...
- and that "in less than ten years, for example, a Black elite has emerged in South Africa, staffing the top levels of the civil service and taking seats in corporate boardrooms... (Winant & Seidman, 2001:217) ...
- due to "aggressive new affirmative action policies" (Pottinger, 2008:105) ...

- and a “project of Black economic empowerment which has seen it [ANC] attempt to promote Black-owned corporations [and] a Black capitalist class,” (Southall).

The ANC too lays claim to the BMC’s expansion, ascribing it to the influence and success of its redress and transformation policies. Notably, the ANC’s spokesperson Jackson Mthembu proclaimed “the African National Congress celebrates the successes of our deliberate and decisive socio-economic transformation policies which are yielding results.” Similarly, Jacob Zuma President of the party and Republic of South Africa declared “as a result of these [B-BBEE] and other developments resulting from progressive government policies, there has been an impressive growth of the Black middle class.”

However, alongside many analysts, the ANC has recognized the corruption challenges faced by the party and the government it leads that have resulted from class aspiration. This is illustrated by Southall’s (2005) criticism that the increase of the BMC has been cronyistic and aimed at driving what he calls domestic patriotic investment. In tandem with such criticisms, Ndletyana, Makhalemele & Mathekga (2013) studied the effect of ANC patronage politics on local government performance. They found that councillors used their political capital to override decisions of municipal officials by ordering specific job and tender allocations. Consequentially, qualified audits have been a perennial problem for the ANC government, where 56,1% of audited municipalities received qualified audits for 2011/2012 (SAIRR, 2013:875).

The ANC now suffers from the enduring fear that individuals from the new Black middle class, having benefitted from state opportunities for advancement, may be tempted to follow personal advancement or upward social mobility aspirations and thus mutate into “a parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie” (ANC 2007: para. 105). The party aims to take “urgent action” against its parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie and has resolved that “measures should be put in place to prevent abuse of power or office for private gain or factional interests” (ANC’s 53rd National Conference Resolutions, 2013:4). Labour unions have also been victim to the ‘corrupting’ tendency of upward mobility as illustrated by Beresford’s (2012) research at the National Union of

Mineworkers (NUM). Beresford found that upward mobility resulting from the promotion of shop stewards to management positions was eroding NUM's unifying class identity.

Flowing from the above described discourse is the argument that "race-based policies of the ANC have created an exceptionally strong bond between it and the African core middle class" and the retention of a "powerful sense of solidarity with the ANC and the former liberation movement" (Schlemmer, 2005:10). Schlemmer's study reflected the dominance of BMC-ANC support, wherein 64% and 68% of his study's interviewees and survey respondents said they would vote for the ANC in the next elections. Notably, his results show a significant fracturing of BMC-ANC support as 23% were seeking out another party. Schultz-Herzenberg's (2009b) doctoral study of voter attitudes between 1994 and 2009 supports this argument where the Black owner/employer and professional/supervisory occupations supported the ANC.

Schlemmer explained that the BMC-ANC bond did not indicate singular captivation and acquiescence to the ANC. Instead it reflected a pragmatic preference for the ANC, one that is consistent, solid and durable. Thus BMC support takes place alongside the questioning and critiquing the party's governmental performance and policies; particularly from the tertiary educated, bureaucrats, independent professionals and community leaders. Schlemmer (2005:11) concluded that the increasing dissention of BMC members within the ANC would begin to assist the process of democratic pluralism and consolidation.

A much debated issue has also been the political alignment of the old BMC. Theorists debated how the racially motivated creation of the BMC would impact on its political alignment. This issue rose to prominence with the apartheid state's extension of multiple, but carefully limited economic reforms aimed at moderately increasing the numbers of the old BMC. The apartheid state sought to utilise this class as a buffer between the white minority and rioting Black masses: workers; unions and political parties. Thus in promoting a Black middle class, the reforms included the additional extension of greater independence to Bantustans and urban-based community councils. The apartheid state also widened the provision of trading licenses, business finance. The relaxation of the colour bar was part of the reforms

and implemented through the Black Advancement (BA) programme which resulted in the placement of Africans in middle class occupations at the semi-skilled level.

Notwithstanding the caveats and permutations in the arguments, the analysis thereof was polarized. On the one hand, some theorists advanced the argument that ‘because of economic inclusion, the new Black middle class would align itself with the reforming apartheid capitalist state and white monopoly capital’ (Southall, 1980; Saul & Gelb 1981; Sarakinsky, 1986; Hudson & Sarakinsky, 1986; Jozana, 1989). Therefore, given the material inclusion and upward mobility, class rather than race would emerge as the dominant organizing principle for the Black middle class. The opposing argument was that ‘despite economic inclusion, the apartheid-made new Black middle class would align itself with national struggle for liberation’ (Nolutshungu, 1982; Bank, 1990; Nzimande, 1986; 1991). Joe Slovo, the preeminent theorist of the South African Communist Party (SACP) stressed racial solidarity over class alliance stating that given the racialisation of class, the Black middle class had no political alliance with its white counterparts: -

The limitations imposed by the white state upon its development meant that the historically, the African petty bourgeoisie linked up with the African masses in a class alliance contained within the rubric of the African National Congress (Southall, 1980:39).

Southall (1980) has also observed that the reforms, while having the veneer of deracialising the economy, were more about stripping Black political movements of leadership, given that some of this leadership came from the Black middle class. Nolutshungu (1982:91) in fact argued that the quantitative nature of material expansion to the Black bourgeoisie was not more important than the fact that the relations being forged with Black business were more about “containment rather than transformation, encadrement rather than embourgeoisement.”

Though never unanimous and unambiguous (Southall, 2014:653) the old BMC aligned itself with the working class and the liberation struggle. At different points of South Africa’s history, segments of the BMC were either fully co-opted to support apartheid or others opposed apartheid and joined forces with the broader liberation movement, under the leadership of the ANC. For example, Some of the chiefs that

supported apartheid at the height of monopoly capitalism by maintaining the supply of cheap Black labour to 'white' South Africa and keeping the population politically in-check, became increasingly opposed to apartheid by the 1980s (Bank & Southall, 1996).

The political stance of urban and Bantustan based Black business segment was chameleon like and morphed from co-option to rejection. This segment, while opposed to racial discrimination bought into the economic reforms and moderate inclusion, received capital and infrastructural investments and loans from white business and the apartheid state. This caused Hudson & Sarakinsky (1986:182) to boldly declare: -

Increasingly it appears that the apartheid state is capable of absorbing the demands of the urban African bourgeoisie, and that it is possible for this class to grow both in size and power within the parameters of apartheid. This means that it is chimerical to continue proposing, and hoping to see established, an alliance which has as its aim the overthrow of apartheid.

Civil servants and employees: nurses, teachers, clerks etc., aligned with the broader liberation movement and active in the struggle against apartheid, even in instances where some were co-opted. Nzimande (1991) argued that corporate professionals as the most politically conservative group, reluctant to participate in the structures of the democratic movement in their communities. Instead this group's participation was carefully constructed and its participation happened by default: because they were Black and lived in the townships, they could not entirely ignore the mass struggles. Most of this group's activities were church, welfare or developmental activities and sports and recreation. Overall, it would be interesting therefore, to see how the political attitudes have evolved.

1.4 BMC capacity for democratic consolidation & pluralism

Flowing from Lipset's and Seong & Torres's (1993) wealth-democracy thesis, in which economic development is positively correlated to democracy in Western societies, South African social scientists have sought to establish if the quantitative increase of the Black middle class could result in greater democratic multi-partyism by disrupting the ANC's political hegemony. These scholars include: Torres, 2000;

Rivero et al., 2003; Southall, 2004, 2005 & 2014; Schlemmer, 2005; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b and Mattes, 2003 & 2014. In totality therefore, these scholars have explored whether increasingly varied identities; increased education and income; and greater class autonomy could or have contributed towards democratic pluralism and thus democratic consolidation.

For some scholars, the analysis has been two fold. First, it is argued that the BMC is too numerically insignificant to carry out this task, (Rivero et al., 2003 & Ndletyana, 2014). Similarly, Mattes (2014) concluded that the BMC is still a nascent factor in South African politics while Southall (2014) argued that the BMC cannot be taken as inherently progressive. Secondly, the dominant party thesis – foregrounded by Giliomee & Simkins (1999) – has been used to countervail the possibility of such action by the Black middle class: because the BMC's racial and class interests are aligned to the ANC and, as the BMC is itself largely a product of the democratic regime - they remain loyal and are unwilling to challenge the ANC's electoral hegemony (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999; Southall, 2004, 2005 & 2014). Therefore, the Black middle class becomes a politicized class whose political capacity is constructed as limited.

In contrast to the above and notably Southall, Schulz-Herzenberg (2009b) argued that the South African social order is increasingly being characterized by varied social identities and value systems. For Schulz-Herzenberg (2009a, b) class and age identities had the potential to form new political cleavages that contest the racial cleavage that has thus far been the primary social and political identity. Consequential to the evolution of the BMC's identity repertoires, even in the absence of internal coherence and identity cohesion within the BMC as earlier argued for by Schlemmer (2005), so do the chances of fracturing the dominant position of the ANC in the polity increase, particularly as the BMC becomes more varied in its political attitudes (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b). This is supported by Mattes' (2003) who found that class and occupation were emerging as strong identity markers within the BMC and that education and economic development were becoming important policy issues for this class. Later, Schlemmer supposed that as the BMC's assessment of government policy and performance increased, particularly on education and the economy, it would begin to withdraw its ANC support.

Extending Schlemmer's earlier supposition, Mattes found that the BMC was more likely to demand services of a higher order such as free speech, government accountability versus survival goods such as food, water or shelter. In contrast to Southall, Mattes (2014:666) argued that the BMC is less likely to identify with the governing ANC, and more likely to say they would vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA). But, in somewhat a contradictory stance, Mattes also recognised that the BMC was far more likely to define its interests based on the deep history of apartheid than their material status. Against Southall's BMC-ANC dependency thesis, Mattes (2014:19) declares: -

Thus, there is no need to fear that by helping to create a new Black middle class, the governing party has bought itself a new, growing constituency whose loyalty might sustain it if, or when, it begins to lose support amongst the homeless and unemployed.

Similarly to Rivero et al. (2003), Mattes (2014) argued that the BMC is more likely to exit the democratic system than to voice its disgruntlement in any form of collective action. However, for Schulz-Herzeberg (2009b) South African voters are more likely to withdraw support for parties than vote for another party. Statistically, it is possible that the BMC as with other segments of the South African population is beginning to withdraw, rather than vote for an alternative its support for the ANC. This is potentially illustrated by the ANC's declining share of electoral support. So, while the ANC still achieved 66%, 69% and 66% of the electoral support in 1999, 2004 and 2009 respectively, it suffered a decrease in turnout and a reduced share of the vote (Schulz-Herzenberg's, 2009a:4). The proportion of the voting age population (VAP) which voted for the ANC was 47% in 1999 and decreased to 39% in 2004 and 2009. A similar trend was reported by the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR, 2013) in which the ANC's proportion of eligible voters decreased to 38,7% in 2009 from 53,9% in 1994.

1.5 BMC: intersections of race & class

Southall (2004) and Khunou & Krige (2013) see the middle class as important for social and political stability. Southall (2004:535) argued that state managers and

the civil petty bourgeoisie as beneficiaries of EE remained ideologically aligned and sympathetic to the poor but were more individualistic in their advancement and their failing to adequately support the poor. However, Schlemmer (2005) and Khunou & Krige (2013) criticised the low levels of the BMC's participation in voluntary organisations. Schlemmer drew the same conclusion given for the ineffectiveness of the BMC in democratic pluralism: it is too new and too small.

Earlier, Kuper (1965:23) stated that the BMC was becoming more like the white middle class, as the BMC increasingly had the same jobs and lifestyle habits of the white middle class, with political rights being the distinguishing factor. For many therefore, being Black and middle class meant living a "white life." While this may be true, in the democratic period Statistics South Africa (2009) found that the BMC's income expenditure lagged other racial groups. Only 14% of urban African households spent over R5, 000 per month, compared to 45% white, 27% Asian and 23% coloured middle class households. Schlemmer's (2005:11) argument was different. He found mutual isolation between the white and Black middle classes, with little informal and extra-occupational contact between them. Contrastingly, Khunou (2013:1) recognised that the Black middle class was "othered in interaction with whites and white spaces."

If we take managers as a proxy for professionals, then the tension between race and advancement into middle class occupations previously dominated by white people was illustrated in Nzimande's (1991) doctoral study of African personnel managers who had benefitted from the BA programme and Modisha's (2006) master's study of Black managers as beneficiaries of EE. Both were conducted in the corporate sector.

Nzimande and Modisha found that corporate spaces and notions of professionalism therein were racialized and underpinned by the ideology of white supremacy. Illustrating this, Nzimande argued that much of the liberal scholarship of the time used the so-called 'backwardness' and inadequate educational backgrounds of Africans to validate the slowness of African advancement in varied workspaces. He argued that the BA programme was used to control, amend and shape Black people's way of being, through expectations of specific types of dress; acquaintances and ways of speaking. Of this he concluded that the success of African corporate professionals

depended on their acceptance of racism in the workplace. Modisha's study illustrated the perpetuation of an invisible colour bar and the lack of substantive inclusion of Black managers in various corporate workspaces.

Echoing Schlemmer, Khunou (2013) states that various segments of the affluent and educated Black middle class struggle to reconcile class and racial identity. BMC respondents in Schlemmer's study (2005:7) said they were middle class, 31% said they were working class while 5% claimed to be poor. Schlemmer (2005:7) reasoned that while the BMC enjoyed high salaries they had not "acquired the material security of accumulated assets." Alternatively Phadi & Ceruti, (2011:99) found that Black people in Soweto used 'affordability,' self-sufficiency, support, comparison, youth culture, and language to self-identify as middle class. Affordability, "the size of your pocket" and having a job were the key concepts that Sowetans used to classify and identify the middle class (Phadi & Ceruti, 2011:99-100).

The new BMC, especially the state-employed BMC, has been framed as a hyper-consuming class, which implicitly and explicitly is corrupt and non-productive. Words like tenderpreneurship, rent-seeking, corruption and deployment are dirty words, used mostly to describe the new BMC. Take Fine (2012:565) as an example: "a new Black elite [that] has benefitted from the processes of economic and social restructuring in a way that has been entirely parasitical and the exact antithesis of an aspiring indigenous, developmental bourgeoisie." Southall (2013:1) too, has noted the pathologisation of the new Black middle class: and that the BMC been presented as "is essentially shallow, if not actually parasitic, and seems to lack the industrious and productive character which has traditionally been associated with its historic counterparts in, especially, European and American society." Correspondingly, Krige (2012:21) has cautioned against the tendency to pathologise the BMC as this limits our understanding of the "historically constructed, multiple and complex meanings" of consumption.

Within the above noted scholarship, few have explored the extent of BMC indebtedness and the positive and negative aspects of a financialised BMC. In Marxist terms we could ask about the pauperization of the Black middle class, who without

necessarily collapsing into the proletariat are proletarianised by the need to sell their labour into the future.

1.6 Research objectives

Various authors have argued that professionalization increases political participation and consciousness (Huntington, 1991; Lipset et al., 1993; Torres, 2000), thus establishing a positive correlation between wealth and democracy: the wealthier and more educated a society becomes, the more likely it will become democratic. Therefore, professionalization becomes translated into political resources and capital (Torres, 2000). More specifically, following Lipset et al., (1993), Rivero et al., (2003:7) argued that increased education and income combined with complex and interdependent work situations result in increased demands for political freedom. For Torres (2000:86) “wealth eases burdens, both individual and collective; education expands the number of professionals and the middle class, who are often perceived to be most sympathetic to democratic liberal ideals and the most sophisticated citizens.” In the South African case, this suggests that an educated and professional BMC could play an important role in the consolidation of democracy.

However, the political role of the middle classes depends on interests and historical situations and the availability of class alliances – whether these are forged with the owners of production or the working classes and/or the lower classes (Wright, 1997; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992 in Southall, 2014:2). This study problematizes this. I acknowledge that the Black middle class has tended to show allegiance to the ANC. I also agree with the arguments posed by scholars such as Lipset and Rueschemeyer that an educated and income secure BMC may show greater demand for socio-political and more importantly, economic growth and stability, and question whether the ANC remains the party to achieve this.

I therefore aim to formulate an understanding of the socio-political capacity of higher professionals, entrepreneurs and managers in the BMC, by examining the interaction between class, professional and socio-political identities. I ask: **“how do middle class identities and location affect BMC political attitudes?”** I thus have two interrelated research objectives that I qualitatively explore:

1. The meanings of being Black and middle class, and
2. Political attitudes and activities of the professional Black middle class.

Fundamentally, I hope to contribute a better understanding of the socio-political capacity of the Black middle class, and veer from the hitherto insipid cacophony in BMC scholarship.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Theories of the middle class
- Chapter 3: Methodology
- Chapter 4: The meanings of being Black and middle class
- Chapter 5: Political attitudes and activities of the professional Black middle class
- Chapter 6: Discussion & Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

Theories of the Middle Class

2.1 Introduction

Theorists have admitted to the impossibility of an absolute definition of class (Poulantzas, 1974; Abercrombie & Urry, 1983). Indeed, there is theoretical divergence throughout history and across disciplines on what fundamentally constitutes class. Among the theorists that recognise the existence of a middle class, some construct it as relatively homogenous while others stratify it into varied segments. For the most part South African scholarship has applied both the neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian approaches to the political, social, economic and identity treatments of class. Seekings (2008) explains that the period between 1949 and the early 1970s was dominated by Marxist approaches; and Greenstein (1998) reasons that this was due to the analytical congruity between apartheid capitalism and Marxism. On the other hand the neo-Weberian approach has come to dominate the post-1994 era. Other scholars have applied the subjective approach, opting for individual self-selection and placement (Collette, 2009; Alexander, Ceruti, Motseke, Phadi & Wale, 2013).

This chapter presents neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian theoretical approaches to social class and the location of professionals and managers therein.

2.2 The middle class in Marx

With the study of the origins of capitalism as his primary concern, Marx postulated that the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production forms the basic determinant of class. The means of production are identified as land; labour power; buildings; capital; machinery; property. The ownership and non-ownership of the means of production affects the power structures of society.

Marx asserted that in advanced capitalist societies, two main classes, polarised and in conflict with each other would emerge: the bourgeoisie as the owners of the means of production and the proletariat that possesses only its labour to sell (Marx,

1974). Placed between these two classes is the petty bourgeoisie or middle class that is made up of owners of small businesses and workshops, artisans, small manufacturers, landowners and office workers. The latter are intellectual workers involved in the production of surplus value and are non-productive labour, (Macdonald, 1995:36). Importantly, the middle class's means of production is insufficient to permit the employment of hired labour. The movement within industrial capitalism towards even larger production would dispossess the middle class of whatever minimal means of production they owned. Thus, large scale production and capitalist competition eventually squeezes them out, and they become subject to proletarianisation. On the one hand, it seems to be suggested that as the working class becomes increasingly 'dangerous' and politically conscious, the middle class will align itself with the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, there are suggestions in Marx that the middle class would pledge its allegiance with the workers.

Drawing from varied explanatory frameworks, neo-Marxists have attempted to explain the middle class that has, instead of collapsing, tended to increase in capitalist industrialist societies. Mallet (1975) and Poulantzas (1974, 1977) conceived of the two categories of the middle class: the traditional and new petty bourgeoisie made up of professionals and managers. Mallet argued that the new petty bourgeoisie formed a new segment within the working class as technological advancement and automation merged the manual and technical workers. Similarly, Braverman (1974) had argued that technological advancements in industrialised capitalist societies was narrowing and eliminating the differencing skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the production of commodities – particularly as the labour process was being broken up and simplified. Krause (1971:102) argued that increased automation and mechanisation would result in the de-skilling of office workers or white collar workers and lead to their proletarianisation and eventual expulsion from the labour market or work. For Ossowski (1967:191-192) it was within the conditions of collapse and proletarianisation of the middle class that would result in the collectivisation of economic and political interests between the former middle class and worker. Krause (1971:103) reached a different conclusion though, stating that the new middle class would escape proletarianisation by using its political and consumer power to preserve itself.

Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding (1992:2) reviewed the social sciences conception of the middle classes as social classes. They contend that neo-Marxists such as Wright (1978), Carchedi (1977), Abercrombie & Urry (1983), Carter (1985) and Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich (1979) have in various ways conceived of the middle class against the functions it undertakes for capital. For Poulantzas (1974) the new petty bourgeoisie performs authority and supervision over the production process and tends to monopolize knowledge. In Carchedi's work for example, supervision and surveillance undertaken by the middle class for the capitalist class is explored; while Wright examined the control function the new middle class performed over the physical means of production, labour power and investment. Savage, Barlow, Dickens & Fielding (1992:3) concluded that Wright (1978), Carter (1985) and Braverman (1974) body of work has been better at explaining the role of managers in private industry, and less so that of professionals, administrators and the self-employed because of this sub-groups' low participation in the manufacturing process.

2.3 The middle class in Weber

Weber has generally been used to explore the middle classes. Central to the Weberian approach has been the theorization of professionalization and the rise of managers and white-collar workers in modern industrial economies. The concept of multiple structures of social power in Weberian analysis of societal stratification is a key point that differentiates Weber from Marx. Weber established that societies are stratified according to three interrelated but distinct sources of power: class, status/prestige and parties - through which groups and individuals compete for scarce resources (Weber, 1946:181). Power is the ability of individuals or groups "to realise their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Weber, 1946: 160). The economic, social, political and legal terrains of society are the additional structural determinants through which power can be exerted. This is differentiated from Marx, as he argued that economic power determines the social, political and legal terrains of power, so that those who are economically dominant also exercise dominion over these.

Status or prestige refers to the level of esteem or honour associated with social positions and the quality lifestyles of groups or individuals (Weber, 1946: 186-7). Status groups are located in the social order, and share similar lifestyles, values and

identity, and can be constituted according to occupations, religion, ethnicity or party affiliation. Status groups may possess some form of social power, e.g. derived from class position, but power is not the only basis for honour or prestige. Sources of social power differentiate the social location of classes. So, while an individual may possess economic power in the form of capital and/or property, he/she may lack prestige, illustrating the distinctness/separation of the social and economic orders in society. Therefore, Weber established that prestige is distinguishable from power, but can be associated with it.

Parties are structures located in the social or legal realm or the state, and are concerned with acquiring social power. This is one of the reasons that parties can only exist in socialised settings where a rational order exists, and they can thus plan communal action on the basis thereof. They seek to influence policies and make decisions on behalf of their membership in the political order, which may be classes and/or status groups (Weber, 1946: 194-5). Parties range from political parties, trade unions, church or religious groups and so on.

Similar to Marx, Weber determined that in capitalist societies, property and the lack of property formed the basic category of “all class situations” (Weber, 1946:181). But unlike Marx, Weber’s exposition of capitalism emphasised a combination of features: “rationality, the capitalist spirit, *and* formally free markets in capital, labour, goods, services and raw materials” (Macdonald, 1995:36). In free markets, class situations are reflected by market position, which denotes the ability to translate goods, skills and/or services into income in the free commodity or labour markets (Weber, 1946:181).

According to Weber, the fault or benefit of birth, combined with education facilitates the ability to translate skills, and/or services and commodities into an income determined an individual’s life chances. The concept of social mobility is inherent in Weber’s life chances exposition. Individuals have the opportunity to change their class position through the competitive possession of education, which can be translated into an income, or the ownership of commodities/property. Individuals who share similar life-chances, a common position in the market economy, and who derive similar economic rewards constitute a class. “Classes are

not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action” (Weber, 1946:181-2).

Unlike Marx, Weber defined the middle class quite substantially. He argued that as the productive capacity and specialisation of tasks expanded under capitalism, so did the opportunity for individuals to derive an income. Hence there followed the emergence of the middle classes: propertyless intelligentsia and specialists. Professionals, senior managers and administrators undertake specialised tasks within the production & labour processes of enterprises and state bureaucracies. The middle class is distinguished from other classes on the basis of its superior market situation and life chances – members have qualifications and are credentialed, and are thus highly rewarded. For Weber, the middle class is politically neutral, and is a perpetually vacillating group caught between the class struggle of the capitalist and proletarian classes. From this postulation, Weber identified four class categories: the propertied upper class, the propertyless white-collar workers, the petty bourgeoisie (small property owners) and the manual working class who are un-credentialed, semi-skilled and unskilled. Weber’s upper middle class comprises higher professionals, lower professionals and managers as separate groups.

2.4 The professions as the contemporary middle class

The professions are recognised as the fastest growing sector of the occupational structure. This growth has profoundly shifted stratification analyses, evident in the above-noted revisions of Marxist explications of the middle class. The expansion of the welfare bureaucratic state, advancements in information and technology and the expansion of multi-national corporations have resulted in the growth of professions (Weber, 1946; Macdonald, 1995). Additionally, resulting from technological innovation, new types of occupations have exploded into the market alongside the traditional professions in medicine, commerce and law. Thus, professions as knowledge-based occupations have both been seen as producers and products of industrialisation, as their skills and knowledge are regarded as essential for the development and expansion of industrial economies (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995).

As with most subjects in the social sciences, there are multiple definitions of professions. Ritzer (1975:630) helpfully identified three sociological approaches to defining the professions: structural, processual and power. Associated with Talcott Parsons, the structural approach provides a taxonomic approach that outlines a list of static characteristics that an occupation must possess in order to be regarded as a profession. The basic characteristics of a profession are outlined as: body of theoretical knowledge; some degree of professional autonomy; an ethic that members enforce and accountability to society (Macdonald, 1995). Ritzer sees the structural approach as ahistorical since it ascribes static characteristics to professions in contradistinction to occupations. The processual approach can be divided into two: action and power approaches. In the processual approach, for which Wilensky (1964) is prominent, occupations mature through various stages before being recognised as professions, *ibid*. Wilensky also recognised medicine, law, engineering and science as the classic professions. Ritzer explains that the power approach, argued more prominently by Freidson (1970) is a relatively modern approach that emphasises monopoly over work tasks and a dominant position in the division of labour. Importantly the power approach remains congruent with and encompasses the two afore-mentioned approaches.

With these approaches in mind, Carter and Wilson's (2006) definition of a profession as an occupation that requires extensive training, the study and mastery of specialized knowledge is processual. A profession thus requires accreditation, certification, or licensing. Structurally, it is governed by a specific code of ethics, norms, standards and rules that control and hold members accountable. There are three segments in the professional group: higher, lower and managers. Higher professionals require extensive training, the study and mastery of specialised knowledge, accreditation, certification or licensing. Furthermore, they are held to a specific code of ethics to which they are held accountable (Macdonald, 1995; Carter & Wilson, 2006). As part of the middle class, higher professionals occupy an advantageous location in terms of prestige, conditions of employment, roles and income – they are the higher professionals, senior managers, administrators, and successful business people in the areas of medicine, law, science and engineering, the clergy and academia. Lower professionals are the teachers, nurses, social workers, librarians, etc. (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995).

Neo-Weberian theories on the professions emphasise the action approach, while neo-Marxists emphasise the power approach. Autonomy is a fundamental tenet for professions that encompasses both the action and power approaches, and professionals control professionals through professional bodies. Autonomy is closely linked to professional power, which is the ability to influence or persuade decision-makers to act in ways that are congruent with whatever desired outcomes (Macdonald, 1995). Professional bodies are therefore instrumental in maintaining the power of professions. They do this by upholding professional autonomy, controlling and regulating entry into the professions: thus creating a monopoly on knowledge. So occupations in seeking to professionalize work to secure, enhance, maintain the social and economic standing of its members, and achieve a relative advantage in the structure of inequality (Macdonald, 1995:36).

Within the power approach, neo-Marxists see professions utilising political and social processes to secure and reproduce privileged positions in society. Thus, professions may use their relationship with the state or governments to reproduce and maintain a privilege position in society. Strong relationships with the state are maintained as they require their existence to be legitimized by law. From the neo-Weberian perspective, professional closure as the control of supply of professionals which is also legitimised by law, maintains the high levels of demand and reward for professional services; high status and privileged terms and conditions of work. The action approach therefore emphasise the influence that professionals have in shaping the organisations and environments within which they operate. The requirement for extensive and specialised training and qualification is also a form of professional closure. On the other hand, while Marxists' view professional power as exercised in order to counteract the threat of de-professionalisation and proletarianisation, neo-Weberians see professions acting to perpetuate greater autonomy, self-direction and a dominant position in the division of labour (Freidson, 1983). This is because professional status is important and actively pursued via individual and collective action rather than macro-structural influences. Neo-Weberians therefore emphasise the ability and extent of influence of professionals in bureaucratic or corporate settings.

Evetts (2003) outlined the challenges that professions face in maintaining autonomy, power and prestige. For example, professions have faced reductions in their autonomy and dominance, as well as the ability to exercise occupational control (Freidson, 1988, 1994 in Macdonald, 1995). Professionalism and professional work has been given to change as professionals have, over-time worked in employing organisations: professional service firms (PSFs); international and commercial organisations. One of the results of this has been the dilution of professionals' occupational control and decision-making over their work (ibid). Evetts (2003:396) takes the growth of professions, professionalization and professionalism as positive. Using the structural definition of professions she outlines two ways in which professionalism has been defined – either as a normative value or an ideological system of control. She states: -

The most obvious difference is that while professionalism as value system is guardedly optimistic about the positive contributions of the concept to a normative social order, professionalism as ideology focuses more negatively on professionalism as a hegemonic belief system and mechanism of social control for 'professional' workers (Evetts, 2003:396).

It returns to professionalism as an occupational value but in this interpretation professionalism is ideological and used as a means of practitioner/employee control. The discourse of professionalism is taken over, reconstructed and used as an instrument of managerial control in organizations, where professionals are employed (Evetts, 2011:410).

In assessing how the normative value or an ideological system of control play out Evetts (2003:409) states that in some settings or organisations, professionalism is imposed by employers and managers on professionals, even when professionals simply want to carry out the normative values of professionalism (e.g.: dedicated service or autonomous decision-making). These “values are inserted or imposed and a false or selective ideology is used to promote and facilitate occupational change and as a disciplinary mechanism ...” (Evetts, 2003:409). This validates the 1970s and 80s neo-Weberian analysis which dismissed normative claims of professionalism as ways for maintaining professional monopolies. It is not all negative as she does recognise that in some instances the occupation is using the ideology partly in its own

occupational and practitioner interests but sometimes also as a way of promoting and protecting the public interest.

2.5 Definitional approaches to BMC in South Africa

The occupational determination of middle class membership has gained credence in the social sciences, as the sociology of occupations has now come to overlap with social stratification (Pavalko, 1971). Therefore occupation, in combination with education and income has commonly been used as a measure, descriptor and locator of class. This is because in modern, industrial and capitalist markets, skills and credentials have become property that is exchangeable for income and privilege (Macdonald, 1995:37). Note however that Nolutshungu's (1982:51) caveat is important to remember: those uninvolved in physical production are not necessarily classless.

South African scholarship has followed this, using variations of neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian sociological approaches. This has resulted in wide-grouping of middle class occupations. In applying the neo-Weberian occupational approach to class stratification, the middle class would thus consist of a diverse group of salaried workers; ranging from secretaries to accountants, shop-assistants to managers, shopkeepers to social workers. In fact this has been the major challenge in middle class scholarship in South Africa, where the diversity of salaried workers is extraordinarily wide (Crankshaw, 1995). Coburn (1994) regards white-collar workers, managers and technical managers as forming the middle class. Davies (1979) as cited by Crankshaw had a similar definition, as the employment categories of the middle class are the managerial, executive and administrative; professional, semi-professional and technical; and the clerical and sales. However, Crankshaw (1995) highlighted a huge flaw in this approach by stating that the 'clerical and sales' employment category was widely diverse, ranging from, stockbroker to petrol attendant. Schulz-Herzenberg (2009b) added entrepreneurs who fall in the tradition middle class under Marx as part of the contemporary middle class.

Schlemmer's (2005:2-3) middle class stratum comprises – the upper, middle and lower middle classes. The upper middle class is made up of senior executives of large businesses, highly ranked professionals: judges, surgeons, and others who tend to earn

very high fees rather than salaries, and very senior administrators in the public and semi-public sectors. The middle-middle class is made up of middle-level executives, owners of medium sized businesses or small businesses that are capital, technology or knowledge intensive, salaried professionals, and the middle management levels of the public and semi-public sectors. The lower middle class is made up of small business people, clerical and sales workers at responsible levels, modestly paid salaried professionals such as school teachers and nurses, technicians and skilled non-manual service personnel. This study looks at higher professionals working as professionals, managers or entrepreneurs within the public and private sectors.

As a result of the variation in defining and sub-divisions made of the middle class in South Africa, which range from mixing occupation and income, or estimates based on occupational categories; or uses of measurements of living standards, the estimations and calculation of the size of the Black middle class also vary widely.

2.6 Theoretical framework

The definitional approaches taken in this study have been outlined in chapter one. To recap, this study was informed by the neo-Weberian approach to social stratification wherein individuals' occupational position in the labour market was taken as the signifier of class position. Thus, Black professionals, inclusive of those working as managers or entrepreneurs in the public and private sectors, were identified as a segment of the middle class. Thus, this study avoided definitional pitfalls by applying Schlemmer's categorisations of the middle class and selecting two groups therein. The first are higher professionals as part of the upper-middle class that work as lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, IT managers/consultants, either as entrepreneurs or managers. The second are middle-middle class made up of middle-level executives, owners of medium sized businesses or small businesses that are capital, technology or knowledge intensive, salaried professionals, and the middle management levels of the public and semi-public sectors.

More importantly, this disaggregation and specificity of this study allows it to move away from the treatment of the Black middle class as a homogenous group, and allows for depth in the analysis of its political attitudes and activities.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the social sciences, concepts such as race, class and political attitudes are epistemologically complex and contested. In this case, the study thereof demands highly refined research techniques capable of providing descriptive and/or explanatory analyses of the relationships that may exist between these concepts.

As illustrated in chapter one, South African scholarship focuses on questioning the legitimacy and the unintended consequences of the ANC government's socio-economic policies and programmes, to which the expansion of the new BMC is attributed. On the other hand, we see that the ANC showers itself with praise for this expansion. It is within this context that this study took place.

This research asked how the professional and class identities shaped political attitudes. Framed by this question, I applied the qualitative research design because of its idiographic focus with the aim of providing fuller explanations (de Vaus, 2001:22). Therefore, this was a qualitative exploration of how Black middle class professionals construct their professional and political identities. In so doing, I sought to outline the meanings Black professionals ascribe to being Black and middle class. I further sought to outline their political ideas and activities. I sought to examine and outline the factors that affect political participation.

3.2 Sampling

The sampling process involves the identification and selection of units or segments of a population to which the research question applies. This therefore forms the motivation for sampling. Successful sampling enables us to generalize the research results onto the general population from which the sample derives (Babbie, 2007). Qualitative research involves rich and vivid descriptions of people's words and actions within the environment being studied. Therefore, qualitative samples are typically small in size and can range from one to fifteen people on average. Sampling

methods thus guide researchers on how to appropriately select segments or units of the population geared towards answering the research question.

Therefore, guided by the above-stated theoretical framework I applied non-probability sampling through the purposive sampling technique and snowballed therefrom. This therefore enabled a heterogeneous sample of the Black middle class; wherein managers, professionals and entrepreneurs across different sectors participated in the study.

3.3 Research design & methods

According to Coffey & Atkinson (1996:26) qualitative analyses begins with the identification of themes and patterns. In applying the qualitative research design a number of research techniques were combined to construct the meanings that the professional Black middle class attaches to its middle class and political identities. Most notably, these included interviews and focus groups discussions as the key methods for the study (Fouche & de Vos, 2005:133). These were consensually audio-recorded. I was also allowed to take notes.

Interviews are conversations that are discovery-oriented as they “give us access to the observation of others” wherein we can explore respondent’s points of view, feelings, thoughts and perspectives (Weiss, 1994:1). In the research process they are capable of producing detailed descriptions, help show how respondents interpret different events and situations *ibid*. As a research method, interviews are varied, some are standardised and closed; others are open-ended (Weiss, 1994). In between these, is the semi-structured interview that was applied in this study, which breaks uniformity in the conversations and allowed for concentration on “matters on which the respondent is especially able to report” (Weiss, 1994:49). Informed by this, and Janesick’s (2000) idea of improvisation, I used the semi-structured interview.

Focus groups are similar to group discussions and interviews as they allow the gathering of participants’ attitudes, experiences and opinions. In addition, as Janesick (2000) discovered, they open up a space in which the researcher can observe the interactions among the research participants. Thus, researchers are able to observe the symbolic interaction – wherein individual’s self-concepts and images are built up,

reinforced or modified in the process of interaction with other members of society (Kitzinger's (1995). As with Kitzinger's (1995) and Morgan's (1988, 1996) outline of the advantages of a focus group, the BMC participants interacted with each other, explored and challenged each other's views on various BMC issues. They also of course challenged me as the researcher about my study of the BMC at all.

3.3.1 In-depth interviews

Semi-structured interviews with higher-professionals were conducted. The semi-structured interviews were structured into personal, political and contextual themes. They were asked what it meant to be middle class was asked, and how they align themselves with those personally constructed meaning. These questions were then followed by personal and contextual explanations of their political and professional identities. Interviews were thus organized in this way: -

- **Personal biography** – whether interviewees saw themselves as part of the middle class; their ascribed meanings of being middle class.
- **Professional biography** – the types of work and organisations they have worked at.
- **Political biography** – activity in politics, what politics means to them, how they influence the political sphere through their work, if there is a distinction between their professional identity and political identity.

Table 1: Professionals Interviewed

Professionals	#	Date
Lawyer	1	05-04-2014
Chartered Accountants	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA 1: 01-10-2013 • CA 2: 01-10-2013 • CA 3: 24-07-2014
Economist	1	26-03-2014
Specialist Surgeon	1	08-05-2015
Research executive	1	24-07-2014
IT executives	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Exec 1: 16-09-2014 • IT Exec 2: 17-09-2014
Engineering Consultant	1	07-04-2014
Total		10

3.3.2 Focus group discussions

In addition three focus groups in the provinces of Gauteng, Eastern and Western Cape were held with members of the Black middle class: professionals, managers and entrepreneurs. All the focus groups were mixed sex and took 2 to 3 hours. Guided by a focus group schedule (which is appended) these focus groups explored how members of the Black middle class construct their middle class identity for which this study extracts in order to build an understanding thereof. I organized and facilitated the focus groups. However, in the East London focus group part-time students studying with the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Fort Hare for a Masters in African studies and working as managers and senior administrators in the various departments of the state were invited and participated in the focus group. Nonetheless, I remained the facilitator for it.

Table 2: Focus groups conducted

Focus Groups	#	Date
Johannesburg (5 participants)	1	10-07-2013
East London (22 participants)	1	15-07-2013
Cape Town (12 participants)	1	11-09-2013
Total		3

As a facilitator of these discussions I was able to observe and participate in the discussion – exploring, constructing and trying to understand what it meant to be Black and middle class. The material obtained from these discussions have greatly deepened my understanding of the multiple meanings and constructions of being Black and middle class, and in this way have helped to sharpen my understanding in this study.

3.4 Qualitative data analysis

Taking into account South Africa's complex social formation process, it is difficult, if not short sighted, to confine oneself to a single theoretical exposition of class. Seekings (2008:4) cites Crompton's (2008) advice that the plurality and divergence of theoretical approaches on class can be combined in a single study. This can be done even in the case where such approaches appear incompatible or even contradictory. Therefore, in addition to the neo-Weberian approach, I turn to the theoretical

expositions from neo-Marxism in analysing the professional and political attitudes of the Black middle class. In addition, this approach is informed by the understanding offered by Nolutshungu (1982:51), of the necessity to recognise that ideology has an important effect on the total meaning of class, and in the Marxist sense, that the study of class is about understanding the social, economic and political aspects that make up modern society. The combination of material and cultural aspects from Marx and Weber enable an analysis of the varied intersections, interconnections and interdependences between race, class, gender, professional and political attitudes.

Qualitative analysis involves the selection of procedures that enable the organization of masses of data into parts that fit into a broader and structured whole (de Wet & Erasmus 2005:28). Janesick (2000:390) makes a similar observation stating that data presentation in qualitative studies must be balanced by interpretive analysis that exposes the meanings constructed in the study. This study applies interpretive analysis, which is a “consideration of ‘things’ within their context and the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation (de Vaus, 2001:9-10). However, de Vaus (2001:5) also provides caution stating that because human behaviour is always constrained by structures within which people live, researchers can only reach probabilistic explanations in opposition to deterministic ones. I used thematic analysis to interpret my data.

3.4.1 Thematic analysis

This is a flexible method that is commonly used in other qualitative analysis approaches. It allows for the description of a topic or event through the thematic categorization of verbal, behavioural or documented data. It enables the identification and extraction of patterns within the data and the development of themes therefrom. Deductive and inductive approaches are used in identifying themes, in which the latter refers to the data itself is used to derive a structure of analysis. I used inductive analysis after I had applied the deductive approach since my instruments were arranged into themes relating to my research question. I underwent the 6 different phases involved in thematic analysis.

Familiarization – this stage is also called immersion. The researcher thus began by reading and re-reading the transcripts and extracting patterns. In this way, I began to

make sense of the issues arising out of the data. I structured these into a table with lots of text for all the focus groups and interviews. From this text, I began to generate my first level of codes. This stage is usually called the data reduction phase. From these tables I began a refinement process, where I extracted the data that directly responded to my research questions. I then searched, identified and explained the emergent themes, and in this way the all the transcripts began merging or coming together. After this, I reviewed the themes and constructed the final themes. In this way, I was able to construct two chapters that describe and analyse the findings at the same time. In presenting the data, I refer to all the participants of the study as *discussants*.

3.5 Ethical issues

People signed and gave verbal consent to being interviewed. Limitations of the study

There is one significant limitation to the study that is apparent to me. Given the highly politicised nature of the local government, and multiple media reports about corruption and such and such, respondents may be reticent or exaggerate what is happening. To some extent, this is limited by the verifying the standing of the municipality, through annual financial statements from the Auditor General. But it remains that the interpretation of professionalism and political attitudes is highly subjective.

Retrospective questions can also be used in order to gather information about the dynamics of change (Torres, 2000:101). Retrospective questions do, however, present a whole set of other problems like bad memory, etc. especially in periods of intense, rapid change.

CHAPTER FOUR

Meanings of being Black and middle class

4.1 Introduction

In what follows, this chapter draws heavily on the focus group discussions with entrepreneurs, managers and professionals in the public and private sectors to map the meanings of being Black and middle class, and to a lesser extent, the interview material with higher professionals is also included. The meanings of being BMC are important in foregrounding this group's political attitudes, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Overall, while discussions on being middle class were firmly pegged on being Black, there were distinct differences in the framing of class experiences by discussants in this study. There were discernible differences across the three provinces in the way that discussants framed their class experiences. In Johannesburg (JHB), the gendered dimensions the interaction thereof with class mobility, race and culture emerged strongly. For example, that Black women were 'outsourcing' their parenting responsibilities to "nannies" while Black men were feeling emasculated by successful female corporate wives or partners. In the East London (EL) discussion, class mobility in the context of acute poverty; as well as a politicised rejection of the middle class identity were major highlights. Many spoken to here still lived in the townships, unlike in Johannesburg and Cape Town (CT), while some lived in old middle class white suburbs. In Johannesburg and Cape Town, discussants were transient township visitors. In Cape Town race mattered more than class, it was first being Black and then second being middle class, thus the discussion was firmly rooted in being Black *and* middle class. This was particularly exposed when participants spoke of employment and business opportunities, and choosing a suburb to live in. The highlight was that private sector employment and advancement was racially organised, first it was the white person followed by the coloured guy to share what is left, and for the Black person it is said "manage that one." Residence in the city is seen as closed off to Black people or "locals," where one male participant spoke of the surprise he was

met with when he went to view a flat to rent: “I didn’t think, you just don’t sound Black.”

4.2 Racialised & commercialised objects of curiosity

Kuper’s (1965) criticism of the exoticising attention imposed on the old BMC: ‘as if their existence were proof of Africans’ evolution’ remains cogent, as broad based attention on the BMC’s wealth, patterns of consumption, style of dress, and moderating or revolutionary tendencies continues today. As with the UCT *Black diamonds* study, it has become far more prevalent to quantify and qualify the commercial and consumption patterns and power of the emergent BMC. Correspondingly, the origins and drivers of BMC emergence and expansion; their aspirations and realities, media and product consumption form the subject of such studies. Khunou (2015:90) has also criticised such BMC framing for “the experience of the Black middle class to an undifferentiated mass of conspicuous consumers.” In response, BMC individuals have treated this interest with deep suspicion and contempt: -

... How class in South Africa has been used for various types of manipulation. ... Why else would we classify people if we don’t want to manipulate them? ... If not to exclude other people, so that [X] and I are a group that looks better than, or the other group gets pity because they’re less than the middle class? - CT FG.

Another CT discussant argued that within the broader South African middle class, the BMC has been made an “object of curiosity, something to study and examine, to be picked apart, to be figured out, like ‘ooh look what it does, look what it says, what it is’ and for me that plays into the history of how Blackness has always been an object of curiosity: ‘ooh look, what is Blackness doing now?’ Black is always other” and as such the BMC is “overrepresented in terms of being studied.”

In the Johannesburg discussion another discussant observed that the BMC has been “incorrectly portrayed” by “marketing companies and everybody else.” In television adverts depict Black women are seen only “when [they] are in the

kitchen cleaning” alongside other racist and sexist depictions of them as “jiving gogos” in expression of the “whole joke about the big mamas,” resulting in the questioning of “who the hell thought this up?” and a response that “it's all white people writing the stories.”

The discussants lamented the hyper-consumption, or consumer citizens popularly known as the Black diamonds, stating that such societal depictions had turned the BMC into “consumers, this insatiable monster that just consumes material. Yet, we don’t even say anything.” This is a response to the commercial appropriation of the Black political struggle to sell their products; where: -

But we keep quiet about the message. ... Johnny Walker decided ‘no, we are going to piss on the struggle.’ You know what they did? They have an advert where Mandela is walking out of jail and you're thinking, ‘wow, beautiful thing.’ And then there is the moment at FNB stadium where we are voting – it's 1994 and 1995 ... walking up ... and then suddenly you have a bloody Walker, a Johnny bloody Walker. ... Pissing on our struggle. Like literally pissing - JHB FG.

One result was a discussant decidedly abdicating her middle class position as a mechanism of distancing herself from commercialised constructions of the BMC. This is reminiscent of the old BMC that abrogated middle class labels as a proxy of distancing itself from the apartheid state: -

I don't classify myself as middle class. And actually when this whole middle class thing started, I actually thought ‘but I mean this is nonsense, why must we now start categorising ourselves?’ ... I will probably be put in the middle class category by whatever ... specs are put. Like maybe that I have a house or whatever, but I don't see myself as middle class. ... I don't want to place myself in there - JHB FG.

BMC discussants recognised that as a class they were collectively silent, and tended to protest at the individualistically. One discussant felt that it was necessary to “take that space as Black people and speak for ourselves.”

4.3 Class mobility: The race & class nexus

While Schulz-Herzenberg argued that South Africa was increasingly being characterised by varied social identities and value system, Schlemmer had earlier argued that the BMC lacked internal coherence and identity cohesion. This finding was later reinforced by Khunou & Krige (2013) wherein they argued that the BMC struggled to reconcile its class and racial identity. In a more nuanced analysis, Modisha (2006:59) offered that the struggle to reconcile class positions was based on social status meanings, so while managers in his study categorically belonged to the BMC, they rejected that location because many other Black people were not part of the BMC. Similar to Modisha, I argue that the high levels of intra-racial inequality bond the BMC to race-based alliances rather than class-based alliances.

Discussants were first asked what middle class meant, second if they saw themselves as part of that middle class. In general, both neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian ascriptions of the middle class were identified in responding to the first question, while neo-Marxist understandings were sometimes utilised to disrupt middle class location. Overall, the findings herein illustrate that the BMC applies multiple explanatory contexts to explain its identity and location. For some discussants identity is first taken as Black: an immutable identity, and second: middle class: a tenuous, precarious and inadequate position, making them Black *and* middle class. For example, similar to Khunou's (2013) findings, some discussants were reluctant to identify as middle class.

This research illustrates the prevalence of a Weber's (1948) exposition of the utility of education and skills in the market place, first in delineating its parameters and second in explanations of class mobility. Discussants explained that the middle class was about "possession" and the extent thereof; the ability of "education" to "change your class into middle class;" or "money's" ability to get business people "out of the lower class." Therefore education, money and business were instrumental for class mobility.

I think if one approaches this aspect of being [middle class], from a historical point of view, it will always refer to a person who is in the

middle in terms of having a job; in terms of having a salary that you earn; in terms of being educated - EL FG.

It's the professionals; it is people with qualification[s] and above, degrees, diplomas, very scarce ones. ... They are able to shoot in the higher class, up into the middle class. Highly skilled individuals that earn better salaries, they are more secured skill wise. I am qualified, I can do it. ... The source of income difference, if I group [them] they earn about R25, 000 upwards in terms of affordability. You can class them according to their salary range as well - IT Executive 1, JHB.

The middle class means the professionals, as the 5% or 10% of the richest of South Africa. People that have a profession that they can attribute a skill to ... Individuals that are white-collar [and] individuals that can afford to employ another person ... - IT Executive 2, JHB.

From above it is clear that class mobility resulted from and in income, which therefore enabled affordability. Thus, education and skills, income and concomitantly affordability, and importantly, the extent of affordability became the indispensable factors in delineating or defining the middle class parameters, a finding that reinforces Phadi & Ceruti's (2011) assertions. In addition, because education enabled class mobility, it was a strong value and "everything" for many of the BMC discussants.

From a neo-Marxist perspective, one discussant explained that the instruments of class mobility – education, occupation and income – disrupted the "political" location of being working class: -

In some perspectives it differs. Like politically, for example, because if you've got money, then your status becomes debated and it means you cannot be regarded as being poor ... Then it means politically you become somebody else – EL FG.

I work, I earn an income. You can call me middle class. But I align myself to workers. I earn an income because I am a worker. This makes me working class. Politically I am a working class person – EL FG.

These statements reflect a tension between the race and class identity tropes, and may be construed as a BMC that struggles to reconcile its class and racial identities. However, this repeated finding may, instead, be suggesting that occupation and income as class markers do not automatically translate into a class identities. That is, from a measurement perspective – it is possible to locate individuals into the middle class, but this does not necessarily translate into class identity.

Furthermore, these statements suggest the resilience of a political and working class identity of the 70s and 80s. They suggest continuity in class and belonging, wherein the old BMC identified with the working class and assumed the same political identity (Southall, 1980). It further confirms Mdletyana's (2014) assertion that the BMC carries the working class's cultural values and practices. The working class denotes a racial category in South Africa, therefore, identity constructions along the working class lines dovetails with racial and Black solidarity. Therefore it is less that the BMC struggles to reconcile its class and racial identity as suggested Schlemmer, 2005; Modisha, 2006 and Khunou, 2013. Instead of this common understanding, it seems more possible that segments of the new BMC have an identity that is historically defined and continues today. One that may in fact be reinforced by the continued economic dominance of white capital.

4.4 Affordability & the mutability of middle class location

But what of belonging? Belonging to the middle class is attained through affordability, but affordability is disrupted by status and education. The next section discusses the two. As with Phadi & Ceruti's (2011) findings, affordability and its extent was a crucial factor in determining the parameters of the middle class and belonging. Affordability therefore meant the ability to meet the expenses of the "basic" necessities of life or the "trappings of middle class life" such as a house; car; food; private education for their children; a holiday and credit.

I am middle class; I can afford a car, house, except luxury, like an aircraft, R5m house, a boat. The rest I can afford: fees, small house – CA, Durban.

What I want I can afford. I have a house and car. Go to Mauritius, I've got a plan. Nothing really is beyond my reach – Lawyer, JHB.

The guys that can afford to qualify for a house, car, credit. To go on holiday. To have appropriate life. ...Individuals that can go for 6 months without having a job and still have enough to keep them going – IT Executive 2, JHB.

An important distinction from Phadi & Ceruti's findings was the extent of affordability and presence of disposable income after the basic needs noted above had been met: "because from where I stand, I think a middle class is someone that is able to pay his or her bills and still have money to enjoy life." Therefore, the ability to consume luxury items such as overseas holidays and privately provided services such as education and healthcare and type of residential area were key distinguishing factors in Black middle class life and belonging, and indicate different levels of middle class location. Interestingly, one IT executive added the ability to choose and work where he desired as a measure of being middle class.

I do consider myself that [middle class], because I am pretty much am able to do the things that I have defined, I am able to live, own multiple cars, I can choose where I wanna live, or work. I have chosen where I wanna work – IT Executive 2, JHB.

I really can't imagine that because somebody has achieved their basic needs, that they're middle class. I really think that would be to degrade the kind of quality that as individuals we should be pursuing. Because, just because I have shelter, regardless of the quality of that shelter, just because I have money ... - CT FG.

4.4.1 Residence

Residential location was used to determine working, middle and upper class location; wherein for some, living in the township instead of a suburb meant not being middle class: “I said I'm not middle class because I live in the township, I live in Langa” and “I don't consider myself the middle class. I'm still poor. I live in the township. To me people are middle class when they live in the suburbs.” There were distinctions on the type or location of suburbs that people lived in, for example, for one lawyer living in “Sandhurst and Westcliff is upper class,” and “the elites.” Therefore the quality of life was essential in defining middle class belonging.

The choice of a lifestyle and the extent of affordability were therefore the distinguishing factors for middle class belonging; where the conditions for middle class location have been met, however, individuals abdicate or choose against it. This is in tandem with Nzimande (1991:275) emphasis that “classes are not merely 'objective' categories, but that they carry within them a baggage of subjective experiences.” This may be governed by different set of values that drive choices:

He has 3 masters [degrees], he is a teacher, but he lives in the township. But he chose to live a lower level life, the township life. You fit the class but you are not living the class - IT Executive 1, JHB.

Because there are people who are very wealthy, and they do live in neighbourhoods which someone would categorise as being less than, or not where the wealthy live... But they choose to live there maybe because of family or they have an affinity to the area and so they are comfortable. That happens all over the world – CT FG.

I fit the class, but maybe some other people they say I am lowering myself. I am not living the lifestyle. These guys they tend to buy fancy house, they go overseas, they are following another category of the African culture. I haven't familiarise myself to it. I stay in in a townhouse in a suburb; I haven't bought those big houses, the big estate houses,

those luxury in your face and stuff. I haven't decided to choose that. I go on overseas trips, but not as often as them. My friends go every year, but I don't. And hence, when you sit with the other person, it display[s] you as 'you have.' I am not the materialistic guy. The time will come, but at this stage, no not yet - IT Executive 1, JHB.

Just as affordability placed individuals in the middle class, the lack thereof also dislocated, tempered or made middle class belonging tenuous.

I mean we cannot afford certain things and with middle class comes the status of being able to afford - EL FG.

I am an aspirant middle class because I cannot today decide that, 'oh, it's such a beautiful weekend, a weekend in my holiday flat in Cape Town would do.' To me that's middle class and my savings are not enough and my retirement annuity is not enough for me to say: 'bye government, thank you for the job.' I can't. And my sense of accomplishment is not at a point where I can do certain things without even giving a second thought to it. But, having said that, I say I'm aspirant middle class because I always love, I say to my colleagues do your hair where you can sue. Do you hair where you can take them to the cleaners – GP FG.

This view illustrates two things related to being middle class: aspiration to consolidate and extend middle class position or move into a higher rung within the middle class. Also, it is clear from this discussion that leaving work would truncate her current position within the middle class because of a loss of income.

4.4.2 Status & middle class belonging

So, while an individual may possess economic power in the form of capital and/or property, they may lack prestige; therefore illustrating the distinctness/separation of the social and economic orders in society as Weber (1948) explained. Affordability and disposable income confirmed or disrupted middle class belonging. Yet, status emerged as an important indicator of middle class belonging: -

The middle class there is smugglers; they live in mansions in Langa Township. So do I call them role models? I'm more educated than them but they're richer than me. That's why I'm saying [I'm] not the middle class, when I compare myself to the people who are richer than me - EL FG.

It's not always applicable to everybody because that thing is sort of a dynamic thing. ... I may be employed by that guy from the municipality there and then I get some few things overnight without being educated and then I have money. Would you classify me [middle class] if I have money? - EL FG.

Class is also defined by having an education; to me it's not just about money. I was born and brought up in England, and for someone to consider themselves middle class, they will have a certain level of school and gone to university, and be earning an extremely good - CT FG.

The above suggests discontinuity with Krige's (2012) argument that being middle class under apartheid meant knowledge of where individuals worked and derived income, because in the contemporary setting, an income can be derived from 'dodgy' operations and enable middle class location. Therefore in post-liberation South Africa, being middle class is no longer synonymous with being educated and/or credentialed. Indeed, this echoes Weber's (1948) stated tension between status and middle class position.

4.5 Inter-racial relativity

Kuper (1965) argued that the apartheid professional BMC did not enjoy the rewards of their class in the same that their white counterparts did, but did enjoy the status and income and ability to afford. Comparisons of Black and white middle class locations were given where "the middle class for the whites and the middle class for us is not the same;" thus being Black middle class could mean being "above the poverty line," which did not apply for the white middle class. These assertions are consistent with the data presented by StatsSA (2009) and Phadi & Ceruti's (2011)

findings. A white middle class individual was likened to a rich person of upper or higher class location in the Black community, while “the lower class in the white community might pass for middle class in the Black community.” Discussants explained that even in the case of the “same level of education and income” there was qualitative difference in middle class lifestyles between whites and Blacks, and this derived from white people having: -

More and less to do, they have had the money for a long time. We now earn this money, but we can't yet spend it for ourselves. We have to help others that are still very poor. What we have has to be shared amongst many, where there is nothing else - EL FG.

Tempered by the low-level increases in income against high inflation rates, the financial crisis and other dynamics, other discussants explained that the qualitative lifestyle distance between the white and Black middle class was being narrowed, particularly among the younger generation: -

If you compare those young white people and those young black people who came after apartheid, they are earning the same thing and they are struggling the same way - EL FG.

I think it's actually changing. There are actually now quite a lot of white people who are struggling, who have to help the other family members. It's no longer like in the past. You even find some white families who, you know, they have other dependants living with them, not because those kids don't want to move out but the reality is they can't afford to ...
- JHB FG.

4.6 Intra community relativity

It follows that political, social and economic concepts were utilised in delineating the middle class; and importantly, the intersection of race with class modified middle class belonging – particularly along the lines of community. The class position of the BMC must be understood within the context of Black class mobility. Meth (1983:173) previously argued that the apartheid BMC had

expanded from a very small base in a context of a large number of Black unemployed. This situation has remained in South Africa, where StatsSA (2014) illustrated a 40% level of unemployment for the Black-Africans in 2014. Therefore, while the BMC is rapidly expanding as Schlemmer (2005) described it, it does so against an increasing level of unemployed Black-Africans. In South Africa, unemployment increases faster than employment growth, and this has taken place across all educational levels – that is, those considered educated and skilled also suffer from unemployment. The contextual relativity thus places the BMC in an elevated position within communities: -

Being a Black person, comparing myself with the community I'm coming from I'm elevated. I don't want to lie. Because I'm educated, I've got a job; I've got an ... asset, property.... But in my community if I compare myself ... place myself in my community, when I look at myself I'm elevated in comparison to them – EL FG.

In a slightly different way from the above, contextual relativity reinforces claims to middle class location. Therefore, relative affordability in a context of none or low affordability reinforces member's self-placement in the middle class. Therefore, in the same way that Phadi & Ceruti (2011:102) found that middle class self-identification was predominantly based on affordability, for example, private health, South African or overseas higher education, that is the socially compared material reach – so too here: -

I remember growing up in the township knowing one thing ... only. ... What I knew was mother could take us to a private doctor if she wanted to. I knew that I could go to university. I knew a whole lot of things that my family could actually afford it, than our neighbours. And in a way, I thought I was middle class. You compare with what you know ... apples with apples. I got a shock when I first went to Austria and a friend of mine said to the people that he knew 'this is XA coming from a township in Khayelitsha, they're very poor.' I went like 'I'm poor?! Seriously?! I didn't know I was poor.' Because to me, I could afford a lot of other

things than the people around me. I was in Austria for crying out loud! I was overseas, most people then, 1998, couldn't afford to travel! CT FG.

I grew up middle class. Since the day of my birth I have been middle class and even that is a relative experience. I went to university in the US but I was on scholarship and I was work study so I had to work. So next to my peers, the American girls whose parents were financing their education, who had cars, I looked poor. But this was my reality. It's like well, where I come from I'm extremely privileged. My mother had a store, so holidays I will go and work in the shop. ... All we can say to you is that we will educate you up until university. That's all. That is our inheritance to you - JHB FG.

4.6.1 Black tax

Black Tax is about the redistributive position and role that the BMC plays. Class position is affected, shaped and mutated by race, deriving specifically from the above described African employment, unemployment and under-employment – or the general economic well-being of the African community; that “I cannot be middle class and leave my mom in poverty.” Thus, the BMC has “a greater responsibility or greater obligation towards community,” as such affordability is instrumentalised. These are “people are who supporting, not just themselves, but also they have their own kids to support and they also supporting their own parents and other extended family members;” and thus termed the “sandwich generation.”

You know, sometimes they'll be out of electricity in the middle of the month, and you get phone calls and you have to finance electricity in the Eastern Cape or you have to do Internet groceries and have them delivered ... - JHB FG.

Progress for me defines all of us moving forward so I think that's a unique condition of the Black middle class that we never really talk about, like our dependants ... I have to figure out, okay, this goes to A, B, C, D, E before I even touch my own things. So it's also those realities

where you talk about being Black middle class it's like, it's a unique set of circumstances that is really defined in a large part by our Blackness, culturally how it is we operate in the world where families are concerned, where extended families are concerned - JHB FG.

I don't have kids. I have my own expenses. My expenses don't go to other things. ... I see other people who are middle class and all the other pieces of money where they have to go. For me, it's about also disposable income and what happens to my income. So there might be someone else who earns the same amount of money, but they've got a family - CT FG.

It has been argued that the size and income of the middle class is important for democratic transition and consolidation. The South African context of Black tax is an important explanatory variable. I argue that the combination of size, income and Black tax could assist the BMC to consolidate democracy, it holds an influential position of educating and financially supporting working class or unemployed people, they can influence decision making (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014).

4.7 Middle class & debt

Affordability is closely linked to the consumption of debt. In a context of higher levels of community and family responsibilities and obligations, the debt consumption among the BMC is marked. Consumption thereof ranges from the need to afford better education, homes or expensive cars.

It's much better to finance education. I mean when we support these other people, if I may say, it's not so much that we support hobbies. You're mostly supporting school, you're supporting that – GP FG.

One discussant stated that the so-called BMC “full” of credit cards and personal loans that they utilised to differentiate themselves illustrating how debt was being instrumentalised for middle class location. Another stated that the so-called Black diamond generation was not “drowning” but “comatose in debt” because it had

bitten “more than we chew.” Interestingly, one specialist surgeon stated that “once you don’t need the credit you can move away from [being middle class].”

Marxist thinking suggested the pauperisation of the middle class, wherein it would collapse into the proletariat; therefore, the increased financialisation of the BMC, alongside the entire economy for that matter, correlated with its instrumentalisation of debt, is possibly the combination of factors that proletarianise the BMC. Apart from that, discussants stated that capitalist debt was breaking the obligations or responsibility that BMC members typically have for their families and communities.

The problem of capitalism is that the middle class is always the few and you will find that it will always be like. ...(Its) A white man who puts up the yardstick there. So we always rush to that one and he moves a little bit so that there can be another rush and then you always move a little bit ... and in order to reach that position we have got to loan some money and then we are kept in debt to an extent... We said that you have to have a change so that you can be able to improve somebody else’s condition. And then that movement of, which is done by capitalism deliberately, that short movement is always creating you not to have an extra amount of money to improve somebody else’s condition. Then we become selfish and then we become entrenched in those new values without any communal thing - EL FG.

If anyone can change society it should be the middle class but we’re so busy trying to make money, trying to become the professionals. So we don’t have time. So the role that middle class should play is not really being played. The elites would change society, but why should they? They’ve got not reason either than philanthropy ... cause for them South Africa works – Lawyer, JHB.

Unfortunately, as Krige (2012:23) explained it: corporate South Africa rarely reinvests in Black township communities, therefore does not carry the burden of

responsibility and obligation to the communities it encumbers and draws profit from.

... I was once a victim of my own doing that you get this on credit, and then you say, 'ja, but I'll pay you.' I had just moved out of home. I have an excuse, nè? Ja. And it was a bed, it was a need, nè, and a fridge. Of course I could buy it on cash ... but I didn't. I paid – GP FG.

I'll just put it on credit card. We don't have those and you cannot be middle class if you have no credit cards - EL FG.

... They ticked all the boxes, but I would not classify them as middle class. They are so highly geared, they're so much in debt that they actually have very little discretionary income. And what has now happened is because we live, as human beings we tend to be aspirational - CT FG.

Furthermore, debt consumption is also related to aspiration. This aspiration is commercialised by corporate South Africa – wherein various debt related products are, sometimes recklessly so, extended to the BMC. Income allows a person to be middle class, but debt strips away affordability and therefore middle class status. Credit access was a defining marker in being middle class.

4.8 Conclusion

For the discussants herein race remained a stronger identity marker than class, meaning that BMC members saw themselves first as Black and treated class identity and belonging as variable or given to change. A working class identity was also stronger than a middle class identity. The responsibility for family members and communities disciplines middle class positionality, making it tenuous and precarious. This responsibility is also where the social significance of the BMC is derived, as well as it makes them influential members of families, networks and communities. This is where the potential of the BMC to shape the Black community's political ideas and attitudes resides. The precarity was exacerbated by the fact that middle class position was identified and attained through a job, which resulted in credit and affordability, but was mutable.

CHAPTER FIVE

Political attitudes and activities of the professional Black middle class

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws heavily on the interviews conducted with higher professionals to map their political attitudes and activism, in order to offer a perspective on the social and political significance of the Black middle class. Furthermore, data from the focus groups is interwoven into this analysis. It begins by outlining the experiences of Black higher professionals, followed by discussion of the conditions under which the BMC sustains, halts or fractures its support for the ANC.

Various scholars supposed that the materially supported BMC would be politically co-opted to support apartheid (Southall, 1980; Saul & Gelb 1981; Sarakinsky, 1986; Hudson & Sarakinsky, 1986; Jozana, 1989). This supposition was geared on the analysis that class mobility and the concomitant aspiration to consolidate that class position would disrupt and replace the Black racial alliance that stood against apartheid. Conversely, others argued that despite the sprinkling of material support to 'apartheid's chosen few' (Lebelo, 1990), the dominant organising principle for the BMC was race; as such support for and links with the African masses would be sustained.

In democratic South Africa, the expansion of the BMC has caused the resurfacing of this argument. Again, framed against the state as the creator and expander of the BMC, this argument is about whether the new BMC will be politically acquiescent and continue to support its supposed creator: the ANC; or if the support for the ANC will be severed and the BMC will move along to support other political parties and thus strengthening South Africa's democracy; by disrupting the electoral hegemony of the ANC, leading to democratic pluralism. The major concern of both arguments is whether race remains the

dominant organising principle of the Black middle class, or if class has come to supersede race, and thus alter the traditional political support patterns.

5.2 Normative & ideological systems of Black professional exclusion

As with Evetts' (2003) argument, the growth of professions, professionalisation and professionalism has had a positive impact in South Africa. Since 1994, there have been significant rates of entry into the professions by Black people, bolstered first by the Black Advancement (BA) programme of the 1970s. Consequential to the post-1994 employment equity programme and the increased attainment of professional qualifications by Africans, there are now much higher levels of Black professionals in the public and private spheres, thereby increasing African's class mobility.

As Evetts explained, organisations, professionals and managers have defined and applied professionalism as a positive normative occupational value or as a negative ideological system and mechanism of control. Within Nzimande's (1991) research, personnel officers who came through the BA programme faced multiple levels of resistance from white co-workers, managers and corporates. In his research the normative value of professional competence functioned as a hegemonic belief system that was utilised to exclude African professionals within the white-dominated corporate spaces.

Professionals working in the private and public sphere explained the personal and organisational meanings of professionalism. Within the public sphere, discussants identified normative values of professionalism such as the "ethics of the company or municipality," wherein professionals should have "integrity, honesty, punctuality, dignity and the correct technical expertise."

Comparatively, the levels of professionalism are extremely high, or perceived to be higher and more established within the corporate sector. Black higher professionals explained that the corporate spaces into which they entered had existing definitions and rules of the corporate culture, into which they had to assimilate. They also complained that corporate rules and definitions were applied less to white professionals and functioned more to discipline Black professionals.

In line with Nzimande's findings, a lawyer reported that Black food like "samp or pap" was not served as part of the partner meals. Additionally, this lawyer stated that the assimilation of a Black professional into a white-corporate space also meant changing her manner of dress, talk and walk in order "to be the work." She also said that she felt more comfortable with Black than white clients as she "laughs more, [is] more confident, we hug not shake hands, more relaxed," whereas with a white client the working relationship was "stiff, [and they're] just here for the job only." Though this was limited to this discussant, this may suggest that occupational interaction between white and Black higher professionals is racially constrained.

5.2.1 Punctuality & competence: disciplining mechanism of Black professionals

Many other Black higher professionals stated that "being on time" was a strong professional value in the corporate sector, and that this value was applied more rigidly to Blacks. But for many of them this professional value was used to devalue, discipline and/or exclude Black professionals. The following quote illustrates the interplay between punctuality as a professional value; the determination of Black professional success as determined by the existing organisational culture; racialised expectations and how managers supervise and/or manage professionals: -

Being a professional means arriving on time. Doing what is directed within the timelines. There's already a culture, the culture dictates how you would do. For example, if I come to a meeting 5-minutes late [and explain]: 'ah sorry guys, that was my nanny.' It isn't the same as a white person saying it. First of all, I am not even expected to have a nanny. So, how professional we are, especially as Black people, is very relevant. It depends on the kind of boss I have - Economist, JHB.

For a specialist surgeon, punctuality was used as a civilising mission by the cultural norms of corporates, again the expectation thereof was differentially applied to Black and white professionals: -

Professional in these spaces means being civilised. ... You're 5-minutes late, a white colleague comes 5-minutes late, there's a difference. What they are saying is you're not white - Specialist surgeon, JHB.

The economist stated that the corporate culture expected Black professionals to know their place, if they “questioned or contradict what is being said – it is insubordination. Because in this level you are expected to know who is who in the zoo, you must understand levels [corporate hierarchy] and your place in them” (Cited by Ngoma, 2014:161).

Generally, many Black professionals stated that corporates were untransformed in respect of the number of Black professionals therein. One Chartered Accountant (CA) explained that the fund management or financial services sector was “horribly not transformed, because only 4% of the assets sit with Black people [companies].” This CA explained that the “financial services sector is run by white people” and therefore this made it “a white environment ... not a Black environment.” In such spaces Black professionals had to contend against the “myths” that “Black people will not excel in [that] environment.” This he reasoned, was because, historically “Black people have always been seen as miners, rock-drill operators, teachers, policeman, soldiers.” Given this history, Black professionals in white-dominated corporates: -

Get to a point where you need to prove you are capable of doing that [excel as a professional]. And that is where the problem comes. Because before anybody gives you a chance and before anybody believes that you can do something they want you to prove yourself - When the same laws do not apply to your other compatriots, those of a lighter shade (*sic*) - CA 3, JHB.

The above was also reiterated by many other professionals. For example, a lawyer had a similar experience, wherein she explained that white professionals across the corporate hierarchy assumed and treated Black professionals as “incompetent,” who had to prove themselves before being taken “seriously” by their white counterparts. Importantly, she also observed that Black trainee lawyers, who because of EE, are able to get into blue-chip corporate law firms with an average pass of 60% in their law degrees, compared to the 70% and above requirement that is typically upheld for white trainees, tend to come into corporates “with entitlement attitude[s] and tend to

reinforce [the] idea that Blacks aren't corporate material, and only the exception can make it." This forms an unintended consequence of employment equity.

Black professionals work from a place of being competent... you have to wow them [white professionals]. And they're like 'oh you're quite smart.' ... It's only a Black person where comment is made about 'being intelligent, or competent.' I have never heard that comment being said about a white person. First have to wow them and then they take you seriously - Lawyer, JHB.

For these Black higher professionals, competence, a professional value and requirement was used trivially applied and functioned as a mechanism of edging out Black professionals from corporate spaces: -

We're still talking about that racism in the corporate world or in the working space. ...I think people have got no idea how much Black talent gets suppressed every week. It's in the form of you first don't have an education; then you have the education; then you don't have the experience; and then... You get the experience and you're getting there and then it's almost like if ... you didn't put your comma. There's now an exposure of how you didn't put your 'dot' and how you didn't cross your 't' and it's almost as if there is a concerted effort to push Black people out of the workplace because you don't necessarily push them out by firing them or what but you just make the space unliveable - FG JHB.

The above statements illustrate strong continuities in the perceived exclusion of Black professionals in white-dominated corporate spaces. This is because, in a similar fashion, Nzimande (1991) and Modisha (2006) found that technical knowledge or competence was used against in-coming Black professionals in the BA and EE discourses to prove that Black professionals did not belong in previously white-only corporate spaces. In Nzimande's (1991:243) research, Mike Alfred, a personnel consultant is quoted from the *Daily News* (24/2/1987) as stating "we take racism for granted, it's a matter of extreme naturalness to us whites. Over the years we have developed a highly sophisticated set of rationalisations to prevent Blacks from 'climbing' the ladder..." Post-liberation, a Black manager in Modisha's (2006:91)

research complained of a “... tendency for companies to divide positions to be occupied by Black people and people believe that Black people cannot perform like white people.”

An interesting observation about the racialization of professionals and professionalism was made by the specialist surgeon about the general silence from white professionals and organisations on Wouter Basson’s attempt to practice medicine again: -

Take Wouter Basson for instance. When his story is reported, there’s no emphasis on the fact that what he did at Cape Coast and he’s had no remorse for it, should that person be allowed to be a medical doctor in South Africa today?! Outside of the HPCSA there’s very few public institutions that are expressing this question. ... Your white colleagues don’t see anything wrong with Wouter Basson wanting to carry on as normal. Which means they’ve normalised the wrong thing - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

5.2.2 Corporate political neutrality, suppression & discipline

Black professionals in the corporate sector explained that the companies that they worked for were politically “neutral;” “apolitical” and lacked a particular political “identity.” For example, the lawyer stated, “our firm tries very hard to be apolitical. So ANC gives an instruction, we can say ‘no.’ In these politically neutral spaces, the “ability to generate profit” is a primary focus.

Political discussions take place within the organisations, where “people do not come out and voice their opinion in public” and “depending who it is, we can have a political conversation.” This may take place in a clandestine manner or more specifically “it would probably happen in rooms.” For the lawyer, her seniority as a partner in the firm enabled her to express her opinions openly but still with a select audience: -

My friends and I were discussing EFF and ANC and DA. Not that I’m an EFF member, I am not. But I do understand where they’re coming from. So when you share these views, they listen to you coz you’re friends. They

won't listen to Malema's views, and neither will I but I know where they're coming from. In that way they become more tolerant. In conversation and sharing views, you become more tolerant. [For me] the DA and for them the ANC or EFF... Not that it will change their view, but at least you create more tolerance amongst each other – Lawyer, JHB.

The lawyer explained that her principles were that she is “pro-Black” instead of direct support the ANC, whereas the second interviewed IT executive stated that he was assertive and principled and, while a strong supporter of the ANC would not suggest “that we need do this work in the ANC way.” Most importantly, where political conversations take place, Black higher professionals are measured in their interaction because: -

People with their political ideas that are different to yours are with you every day, and those people could have some level of determination on your career. Which then means that, sometimes one has to navigate through this in a careful manner. Careful manner in the sense that your political ideals are not the most important thing here - CA 3, JHB.

The apolitical corporate culture meant that Black professionals that support the ANC did so clandestinely: -

If you were pro-Jacob Zuma in the workplace it would destroy your career, especially in corporate South Africa ... If you try starting to sit with a bunch of colleagues from different racial groups, and you say ‘no, but Jacob Zuma is doing a good job.’ The question isn't ‘why do you say that?’ The question is ‘how can you say that?!’ Like, ‘we thought you were smart, and then you say something so strange.’ But if you thought I was smart, then you would want to know why I'm saying Jacob Zuma is doing a good job. Because, did I become stupid? Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

It would be a negative to say I am a member of the ANC. It would suggest that you are political. And being political has never been a good thing in all the corporates that I have worked in [top South African banks]. ... I have a colleague who is ANC but he hides it. And he is actually quite active, he is a

branch leader. We talk about politics all the time, but it isn't something that is well known in the organisation... - Economist, JHB.

5.3 Sustained support for the ANC

5.3.1 Employment Equity & business opportunities

This research confirms the pervasive argument that the ANC's post-1994 redistributive policies, which represent the removal of racialised barriers to the economy and the imposition positive policies have sustained BMC political support for the party (Mattes, 2014; Modisha, 2006; Rivero, du Toit & Kotze 2003; Southall, 2004; Schlemmer, 2005; Seekings, 2010; Visagie, 2011; Alexander, Ceruti, Motseke, Phadi & Wale, 2013 and UCT 2005, 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b). This is because many of the discussants ascribed class mobility and income accruing to Black people to EE and BEE. In particular, the transformation of higher education was also identified as significant for class mobility.

However, sustained political support for the ANC cannot solely be ascribed to the ANC's redistributive policies. Instead, sustained BMC support for the ANC is reinforced by the perpetual penurious socio-economic conditions and circumstances that the BMC exists within, specifically the high rates of Black unemployment and middle class precarity. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 5, Black tax and high levels of consumerism - including debt consumption have, firstly, created high levels of precarity in middle class position and secondly, increased the need to consolidate middle class position. Aspirationally, the BMC's value of education represents its work towards entrenching its middle class position across generations.

Thus, many BMC professionals, managers and entrepreneurs, first recognized the material improvement in their lives; second aspired to consolidate and entrench their middle class position; and thirdly aspired to move up and beyond it. This reinforces Schlemmer's (2005) argument that the BMC's ANC support was pragmatic, solid and durable. The ANC government, more so than South African corporates that are dominantly white owned, was seen as "a huge source of income and business" and educational opportunities for Black professionals and entrepreneurs, and thus associated strongly with Black class mobility. As such, the BMC-ANC support is instrumentalised or pragmatised and sustained for this reason. This instrumentalised

support for the ANC takes place even in the context of perceived poor or weak party performance, as it functions to strengthen class position and perpetuate class mobility:

-

But if there was a white and qualified person next to you, in the olden days, the white and qualified person would get preference because they are white, but today that has been factored out. Without the ANC, I can honestly say that I don't know that I would be here - CA 3, JHB.

I'm voting for the ANC. ... I am a beneficiary of ANC policy. This is a view one can hold whether you work in corporate South Africa, or as an entrepreneur – Engineering Consultant, JHB (cited by Ngoma, 2014:160).

I voted for business [ANC], it was more business related. I was like 'between the two parties, really?' It boils down to race in this country. One party [DA] is still going to see me as Black, another party [ANC] is going to say 'let's support you in policy. It's not really implemented that way, but at least the thought is there – CT FG (cited by Ngoma, 2014:163).

5.3.1.1 Experienced racism & exclusion: parties & corporates

Furthermore, in the context of persistent white control of the economy (Southall, 2004/2014), sustained political support for the ANC draws from comparative analysis against white parties and white-owned or dominated corporates and businesses. The sustained support for the ANC entailed a direct rejection of the DA because the latter is perceived to have economically excluded BMC individuals and Black people collectively. Black professionals and entrepreneurs viewed the DA as unsupportive of their class mobility, consolidation and entrenchment. As one economist explained "I would vote for the DA if they were clearer on their transformation stance, unfortunately they are not (Ngoma, 2014:162). Thus, professionals and entrepreneurs felt that support for the DA risked their participation and competitiveness in the economy and labour market and thus risked their middle class position, *ibid*. The history of the ANC as a successful liberation party, contrasted with the historical performance of the National Party, now the DA, and the DA's weak performance at Black socio-economic inclusion reinforced the support for the ANC: -

... Especially in the last elections, my vote was emotional because I wasn't choosing the better devil between the two; there was only one to choose from. And even if you don't really want to because... you want to have a learned choice, however there's a past. Past history makes me look at one party [DA] and say – 'you'll never have my vote. Because ... you don't have any interest in me as a black person...' - CT FG.

Considering where we come from, I don't think even with my combination of skills ...the white Nationalist government would have plucked me from wherever I am and encouraged me to actually participate, and to create an enabling environment for me to participate in the mainstream economy – Engineering Consultant, JHB (cited by Ngoma, 2014:160).

A lack of support and racial exclusion from corporates was also reported: -

When we first started our company we could not get a job in the private sector, for love or money. If the government had not been there we would just have folded in the first six months, quite honestly. ... BEE existed but it wasn't even a consideration [for corporates]. It was like 'no, no, we've got our own companies.'¹... One of the very jobs actually that we got in the private sector was with a motor manufacturer and it was a Black man who consciously said 'I want to give you guys a chance because all our suppliers are white and it's a problem.' ... It was a conscious decision to say we need to diversify this space - JHB FG.

There are still challenges in the mainstream economy that are structural, that manifest themselves in racial inequality. Whether ... I am dealing with the banks, I cannot help but think that some of the positions I find myself with the banks is also largely because I am Black - Engineering Consultant, JHB (cited by Ngoma, 2014:160).

The issue of land-ownership was controversial: -

¹ Meaning that white corporates explained that they already had their suppliers.

My feelings are that white society is clinging onto its privilege, not even privilege, it's clinging onto the proceeds of crime and the situation is unbearable. And if they don't come to the party soon we will find a situation which we thought we had avoided 20 years ago. Civil war. No, we can't sit like this, I mean 5% of the land [Black-owned] and people are saying 'but ja, ja but my grandfather bought the farm and he worked to build it up.' Fuck you, your grandfather was given that farm dirt cheap, and it was actually taken from my grandfather. So fuck you! - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

When I read their policies, they are on point, even when we talk about land ... I think for me that will be the time when we access land from a heritage point of view. I could have broken into upper class had my mother had land. So there's a lot of things that I think the ANC can do for me – but I'm not there to influence it - CT FG.

5.3.2 BMC's historical & ideational ties to ANC

The continued racialised exclusion of Black people from economic opportunities; the BMC's historical and ideational ties to the ANC; and the absence of a better political party to rival the ANC within the South Africa's political spectrum worked to sustain BMC political support for the ANC. This supposed deficiency in the electoral marker (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b) lack of a "better political party" to the ANC sustained its support, even in the case where BMC individuals recognised the party's deficiencies, because the ANC represented a: -

Progressive movement, it's the best option we have at the moment. ... I vote all the time. They are the best option, it's screwed up now but... - Research executive, JHB.

This is why a specialist surgeon had sustained his support for the ANC, as he felt that the progressive movement was under attack. He explained that he had returned to support the ANC because the DA and South African media had criminalised the ANC, second that his support was "in solidarity with the rest of the Black population," and third because there was a need to rebuild and strengthen the ANC,

particularly in response to the growing strength of the DA. The following extended quote outlines his position: -

I think we must stick with the stronger group and fix that one, rather than forming 19 splinter groups. Yes I think it is important that we have strength in numbers. ... My conviction of this is strengthened by the fact that, if you look at the South African landscape, the major break away parties that we have seen have all happened on the Black side. On the white side you have a consolidation, where the DA still calls itself the DA but it absorbed the NP. So it can't still be calling itself the DA. But instead on the Black side, you're finding there's splinter groups, COPE, Agang, EFF, New National Party or New Inkatha or whatever. There's always new breakaway movements. And the net effect is the same as that which was desired by the National Party when they promoted tribalism, it's a division and conquer [sic]. So I will stay in the ANC - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

Schulz-Herzenberg's (2009b) asserted that cognitively mobilised voters would move their support based on evaluations of incumbent performance. This differs from the findings presented here. For example, discussants in the CT FG were dissatisfied with the performance of the ANC, where one explained that while the ANC no longer represented what she currently stood for, she continued to vote for the party because of her "emotional ties" to it. Retained support is explained by emotional and historical ties to the ANC, as echoed by another discussant in the same group: -

I think the middle class expects a different service from the government and we're not getting it... I think there's a certain level of expectations that are not being met and had we not had the recent memory of history in South Africa, there's lots of people that could have chosen differently. Then, but I think there's history that arrests us ... me. I'm trying to choose something different, I end up with the same party. ... I was stuck at the president's personality,² that history overrode it – CT FG.

² She did not like the ANC party president Zuma's personality.

On the other hand a CA that strongly supported the ANC because he “did not suffer from amnesia” and had made it as a successful professional because of the ANC and recognised that the ANC was not perfect and had its shortcomings, but he rationalised that many other “political organisations” also had shortcomings. He believed that professionals had to overcome their dislike of particular leaders in the ANC and participate within the party in order to improve its performance. In fact, most fascinatingly he believed that the increased levels of education that the BMC had attained caused it to divorce itself from the ANC as it was led by less educated individuals: -

Yet the very same middle class have been enabled by the very same ANC. They think that they know better. Because I have an education, and I’m a CA, and Jacob Zuma doesn’t have an education and he’s not a CA. And Hlaudi Motsoeneng doesn’t have an education and he’s not a CA, ... I think certain positions should be occupied by certain people with certain qualifications. Which is not necessarily the case. Because some people go to ... the academic university, other people go to the university of life and people go to the university of work experience – CA 3, JHB.

The ANC represented “the best option,” for the deracialisation and development of Black society, which functioned to sustain BMC support. First, the ideational coherence and complementarity between the BMC and ANC maintained political support, and was itself also instrumentalised. Second, and in contrast to Schlemmer, Schulz-Herzenberg, and Mattes these findings illustrate that BMC support for the ANC is based on policy choice and assessment, because too often this literature implicitly suggests that support for the ANC is not based on the BMC’s rational assessment of the ANC’s policies: -

My parents raised us to believe in Black pride, but not necessarily a specific political movement. My dad was an ANC supporter... It’s just that in South Africa that’s racialised. ... Our parents raised us to be good human beings. And growing up the only party that espoused those views was the ANC. And even today I am not convinced that there’s a different party that espouses the same things - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

The above quotation echoes Schulz-Herzenberg's (2014) exposition that homogenous interpersonal networks are significant in shaping political attitudes and vote choice finds cogency in the findings presented here. Discussants recognised that the social networks influenced voting behaviour and attitudes towards a political party so that "as long as that political party is relevant in your house ... that is passed down." A discussion about the voting patterns of 18 year olds, called 'born-frees,' ensued in the Cape Town focus group. In this discussion, it was rationalised that born-frees voted for the ANC and would continue to do so "until people are actually born-free" and until their parents break their ties to the ANC. In this focus group, BMC-ANC support was heightened because "you get marginalised in the Western Cape because you're Black." So that even in the case where families believed in the freeness and equality between Black and white of South Africans "the minute they walk out of your house, the world is gonna tell them 'No! no, no, no!'" Therefore, the perpetuation of a racialised society in which "the struggle is not over]" sustained and reinforced BMC-ANC support.

... By and large I think the ANC has done a lot to improve the lives of the Black people. ANC must continue to work for the poorer population, and for all of us, to address the vestiges of unequal development - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

I am partisan towards poor people that they should get a better deal, partisan that working people should get better salaries... ...Regardless of who the party might be, if they also support those ideas, then they'll get my support. The ANC of course, broadly speaking. Of the parties that are there, the ANC ... comes close to the ideas that I espouse, and it is the one political party that seeks to implement some of the things that I want implemented - Research executive, JHB.

5.4 Active ANC party participation

Many Black higher professionals, whether they supported the ANC or not, were not active in party politics. The main reason for this was the perceived lack of tolerance for "dissent" or opposing views within ANC branches. The lawyer explained that she had wanted to participate in branch-politics as opposed to

complaining about the party on the side-lines, however, she had been dissuaded by the reported lack of tolerance from branches located in suburbia: -

We had a debate, where we're Black middle class keep ... complaining. So what's the point of being an armchair critic? That's not good. Just get out there and actually just be involved. How? Get into the branch structures. My brother went. He says you can't even get a word in, because the minute you dissent you're called 'impimpi' [spy] or whatever. And this is in Sandton. So he says 'it's fine. I'm over it.' I almost did [join a branch] but it was the time where you were hearing a lot of stuff about the branches not being tolerant of different, diverging views - Lawyer, JHB.

The above statement was supported by the opinion of the specialist surgeon, who felt that participating openly in the ANC would rescind his ability to speak freely:-

I think if I was a card carrying member of the ANC I would not be allowed to say some of the things I say as freely, they might be seen as things that you shouldn't say. And I think just as a Black educated South African, I am freer to say more things. If I was, for example in a government employ, I wouldn't be able to have necessarily criticised Zwelithini for saying that the foreigners must go, and if I was in corporate I wouldn't have been able to criticise Zille for saying the foreigners must go, but she was referring to us.... - Specialist Surgeon, JHB.

Our failure as professionals is that we don't engage the organisation [ANC] that we love I understand that maybe the space is not provided for us to engage and so on but I think it's up to us so that how do we then begin to engage and build this organisation... Hence I'm saying that we don't care ... - EL FG.

Instead, for the lawyer it was better for her to spend her time working and ensuring that she continued to rise up the corporate ladder and becoming entrenched in the middle class or elite, rather than arguing with “buffoons” and joining “party that’s already gone wrong.” The research executive explained that while he supported

the ANC, and knew many ANC people and attended ANC events, he was “beyond party politics,” because of his public intellectual role and because “party politics ... can be quite unbecoming, can be quite nasty. It has its own people....” One participant in the CT focus group also thought it important to join and participate in ANC branch politics in order to choose a leader and influence policies. However she was dissuaded by the idea that to be taken seriously and make a meaningful contribution at branch level meant that she had to have political capital, in that her family had to have a strong struggle history: -

So until I, as a middle class person can go to branch and influence policy, go to Mangaung or whatever it is, until I can do that and choose a leader that can represent me, then I have no right to complain ... My perception of the ANC is that it probably wouldn't entertain me, why: because I don't have the credential, I could bring in my father's credentials but I don't know if he is remembered because he died a long time ago – CT FG.

To which another discussant responded: -

It's funny- the way that you sort of express that – it's almost as though there's a second citizenship and that second citizenship is South African. The first citizenship is ANC citizenship. And so, you almost feel like you are in an ANC democracy, but that's not that important; what's more important is your being able to influence ANC policy, ANC decisions, ANC whatever. In my view, I'm a constitutionalist – I find that a little surprising – Cape Town FG participant.

IT executives interviewed herein were both active participants at the branch level. For one, the main reason was to ensure that he participated in the decision-making processes of the ANC. For him, this was as a result of the voting-turn results at the ANC Polokwane conference where then President Thabo Mbeki lost his presidential campaign for the ANC.

I realised that you can't just support the ANC, one must define what it is that I'm supporting within the ANC. I think it was pretty much what happened [at] Polokwane. I actually decided to start participating, because

if I don't participate then there are people will make that decision for me, and I have to be part of that decision making process - IT Executive 2, JHB.

5.5 BMC rejection of DA & Agang SA

As illustrated in the preceding sections, discussants explained the need to “have a learned choice” and break their support for the ANC, but were bound by historical and ideational ties to the party. In addition to this, many of their assessments of other parties led to the conclusion that despite the ANC's failures, South Africa lacked a political replacement for the ANC. Mattes (2014) suggested that the BMC was more likely to support the DA, this does not appear to be the case here. Apart from its DA's low appetite for Black economic empowerment and the deracialisation of the economy, BMC individuals had multiple other problems with the party and would not and had not supported it. For example, the “DA's use of Black people” like Mamphela Ramphele, Lindiwe Mazibuko and Mmusi Maimane³ explains the BMC's perception that the DA was using Black faces to attract Black voters. This caused the BMC's distrust of the party.

Mmusi Maimane - the question as to whether he's got the necessary experience to be president of even the DA is never put forward. The guy has just come into the party like 3 or 4 years and now he's going to be their leader! The same party was willing to put Mamphela Ramphele as president, someone they'd never discussed politics with ever! So just because she was seen to be toeing their line, she was just not an option, she was the ideal option. So the value of things is ascribed by where they come from [being Black] and not the content of what they are saying - Specialist surgeon.

In addition, the lawyer explained that the election of an inexperienced Maimane undermined affirmative action, as when he failed it would serve as proof that Black people were incapable of leadership: -

³ Mazibuko serves as parliamentary leader of the DA from 27 October 2011 to 11 May 2014, while party leader Helen Zille served as Premier of the WC. Maimane succeeded Mazibuko as parliamentary leader in 2014 and subsequently replaced Zille as leader of the party after her resignation from that position.

The DA is not an option, for many reasons, one is that they are anti-ANC and nothing else. ... Lindiwe and Mmusi, I am sure they're intelligent, I am sure they are brilliant. If he becomes leader of Gauteng... it's like making me a CEO of some company, I am sure I am smart, but I am not there yet, those positions come with experience and time and wisdom... You can't just put somebody who is Black and perch them ... putting Mmusi on a pedestal ... when he fails. ... It undermines affirmative action, it undermines Black people... You're putting someone and 'look, look, look, our poster boy' and when he fails it's like all Blacks are unable. That's my issue with the DA. I don't agree with their policies. ... I don't blame anyone who says let me consider the DA, I just don't know how if you're Black you can do that. So there is no choice in South Africa right now - Lawyer, JHB.

Mamphela Ramphela, BMC individuals had perceived leader of Agang South Africa as “such an opportunity.” However, the inability to offer “anything different” and the failed merger between the DA and Agang caused the loss of integrity and belief in the leader. In the end, her failure to attend Parliament after Agang's paltry performance at the polls made her seem like she had entered the political race to raise donor funding!

If you look at someone like Mamphela Ramphela you can see that the money she has made since 1994 has gone to her head! She now thinks she's above the rest of the Black population's struggles and that's why she can preach to them and then not go to Parliament. Yes, if she really believed what she was preaching in her campaign, she would have been in parliament trying to promote it. But she had no intention of going to parliament. In fact she probably just did it for the donor funding - Specialist surgeon, JHB.

And unfortunately there isn't another party – even Agang for that matter – to me it doesn't come with policies ... Actually EFF is something. I like the land part. I'm very passionate about land for Africans – CT FG.

Interestingly, one entrepreneur and supporter of the ANC, imagined that if within a democratic society, where a minority ruled over a majority group, which is if the DA had political rule, the party would feel compelled to perform better than the ANC for fear of Black majority anger. Therefore, “an uncomfortable white government – the DA – will make sure that they do things better. They don’t want the masses to be restless. The white government would work harder to quell any discontent that may arise from the Black masses.”

5.6 Fractured support for the ANC

Southall (2004; 2014) suggested that proximity to the government was likely to determine BMC political support. So, social distance from the ANC, like working the corporate sector may promote independence from the ANC, while government managers and executives may be aligned to the ANC. However, my findings illustrate that proximity to the state and the application of EE and BEE by the ANC works in different ways towards sustaining BMC support of the ANC.

5.6.1 Proximity & the politicisation of occupational settings

First, depending on the proximity of professionals to the ANC led government, as according to the findings of this study, this support is beginning to be frustrated and fractured because “there’s no political tolerance in South Africa. Corrective measures [in local government] are not taking place by politicians. That’s why there’s new formation of political parties.” In contrast to Southall’s (2014) essentialist declaration that the BMC that has “found itself in position of power, privilege and profit is not likely to bite the hand of the party-state that feeds it,” some higher professionals in government have “moved away from supporting the ANC to supporting EFF, while others were privately ambivalent towards the ANC, had no interest in another party, but were silent about this position,” (Ngoma, 2014: 167-168).

There are two ways in which this works. First, the fracturing of ANC support by the BMC takes place from the vantage of a clash between professional autonomy and political influence and interference. Neo-Weberian analysis emphasises the importance of professions’ and professionals’ ability and extent of influence in bureaucratic and corporate settings. Therefore, in this research, higher professionals

operating in highly politicized state organisations that dilute professional power, autonomy, and control over work-tasks has led to the fracturing of their support for the ANC. This finding was particularly poignant in the interviews conducted with CAs employed in the local government sphere. While a lawyer working for a corporate firm stated that for the “first and second administrations [there] were good deployments,” CAs explained that the ANC’s deployment strategy had resulted in the politicization of otherwise technical areas, such as financial management and accounting in the local government sphere. Deployees were perceived as seeking to “gain things for themselves as they are deployed, they only want to benefit from the system.” One CA described the threat to technically governed area of financial management as: -

Our governance structures are intact. We have financial and performance management controls that are intact. The inherent risk that we can’t always manage is temptation. People transgress the controls for personal gain - CA 2, Durban.

Another CA explained that the politicization of work took place through deployees’ lobbying of senior officials and the political elite for budgetary allocations and reallocations that stood outside of authorised annual performance plans. This finding reinforces the same findings that emerged out of Ndletyana et al’s (2013) study, wherein councillors imposed their political authority to divert local government resources. Therefore, the situation of a parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie is continuing and it suggests a back firing of the strategy to increase domestic patriotic investment, as per Southall’s (2005, 2014) argument. The social and political significance of the professional BMC is thus diluted and hindered by the actions of a parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and in fact signals increasing levels of internal conflict between different segments of the BMC. An implication of this is the possibility that, as the BMC increases in number, its political significance may be precipitated or erupted and be realised through this conflict. The imposition of political hierarchy also isolates and silences the professional BMC, to which they devise mechanisms of navigation and survival within the poor public service professional environment.

In the same way that Freidson (1988, 1994) explained it, the political lobbying and imposition of political power thus interfered with the control and autonomy over work that CAs have: -

[Deployees lobby] inside and outside. They lobby senior officials, municipal managers, at the regional office of the ANC. By the time the idea comes to me, it is also ready sorted from those areas and I have to implement, sign off - CA 1, Durban.

They [politicians] don't mean what they say, they don't lead by example. We need to change the way they do things. We have a good leadership [at] senior management and political leadership - CA 2, Durban.

CAs distinguished between the political and accounting professional spheres where "accounting does not mix with politics" and established a tension between the two spheres. CAs use other measures to maintain autonomy and control over work tasks, where assertiveness and technical knowledge is used; in addition to being "a silent politician, but I speak my mind to counsellors. I don't let them get away with anything. I am not a politician but I follow them [politics]. I must understand what is political. I have never been a politician and I will never be." CAs recognized the necessity to "understand the dynamics because you operate within the sphere of politics. Understanding them [the politics] is very important, otherwise you will be lost." At the same time CAs sought to apply "professional standards rather than politics" to carry out work, therefore seeking to maintain the professional autonomy, monopoly and control over work tasks. Commenting on the state of Black professionals within the public sector, the lawyer stated: -

I'm so sick of politics. I used to follow politics quite avidly... But, now, it's like the ANC doesn't care. Every week there's something wrong is happening. The tax guy, the top professional at SARS. Every time at lunch, he was the topic of the day. Why is [it] that every week there's a top Black professional falling? Almost like there's some sort of conspiracy. It looked like it was kinda not normal, but they [white colleagues] were happy. And you find that people don't respect Black professionals - Lawyer, JHB.

The politicized interference also diluted the high status and privileged conditions of work. Another CA recognized the authority of his professional body over his political principals, stating “[I’m a] member of SAICA, I ascribe to their accounting theory by affiliation. ... Can’t serve two chiefs ... we ... didn’t study for politics.” This CA was explaining that work tasks should be controlled by the professional standards prescribed by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) regulatory framework. Therefore, the authority to regulate the standards and rules by the professional body was in tension with that of the organisation’s political principals’ and demands. Southall (2014:657) supposed that BMC “found” itself in positions of power, privilege and profit, and the sentiments from this CA contradict his arrogant stance. This finding further calls for segmentation in the analysis of the BMC.

Thus, the political affiliations and demands, as in the “dirty” politics engendered animosity towards working with “dirty” politicians and politically charged organisations; it further diluted the interest in working for the government, as CAs thus aspired to work in corporate settings or starting their businesses. Therefore, while 40% of the BMC works within the public sector (UCT, 2012), there are those seeking an exit and they are enabled by the high demand for their qualifications and skills (Macdonald, 1995); thus suggesting that the politicisation of the public sector depletes professionals therein.

5.6.2 Poor ANC performance

As with Schlemmer (2005) and Schulz-Herzenberg (2014), although this was not a dominant finding in this research, one discussant stated that he did not vote according to traditional ‘ANC’ values or emotional association to a party.

Certainly having an education and some of these factors we spoke about, I think definitely has an influence. You are voting not based on emotion, not based on what the traditional values were. You are voting based on the issues, based on what policy says. For you to understand what the issues are and what policy says, you have to have a certain level of education, a certain level of understanding of issues around you - CT FG.

One lawyer explained that she would not vote for the ANC anymore, or EFF, because the two exploited lower class' "primal needs" and illiteracy by giving them "food packs" for votes. She explicitly stated that the ANC does not "give a damn" for the middle class, as such the party ignored the needs of the BMC. The party's dependence on the "lower class" vote enabled its success at elections. She explained that while the Black middle class may be dissatisfied with the performance of the ANC, this did not affect the party at the polls because of the lower numbers of the BMC.

We've got one-man-one-vote in South Africa. The most number of votes is in the lower class, which is where the majority of our country is. ... People who don't understand, who aren't literate. ... And if you ask anybody in the middle class, for most of my friends – ANC has just messed up. So, how much do our votes really count? ... They do but not like the lower class. ... But are they [illiterate] equipped enough about how the country should be run? The ANC is going to come back because of the lower class vote. That's why they don't care what the middle class is saying, because really how much are we, we're not that much. They don't give a damn! So we don't have a say when it comes to voting. So that's what enables the ANC and EFF, to be able to go and give food packs to the people in the villages... and then tell them things that are impossible to achieve but they can't discern. That is why you're going to get ANC coming back and EFF getting strength, cause they're appealing to primal needs, and they're ignoring those of the middle class because they can afford to - Lawyer, JHB.

She explained that she would vote as this was important for her and her family, and that she would vote for UDM, not because it was good, but that "the others are bad really." She maintained that she still wanted the ANC in power but wanted to hear "a different voice in parliament."

I will vote. ANC: not a chance. EFF: not a fucking chance. DA; not a fucking chance. For me right now, it's just about getting a different voice into parliament. I want to ensure that the ANC doesn't get the majority vote, they've gone haywire. At the same time, I want them to still be in power

because they're the most valid choice that we have. ... I do want the UDM to win, but I like hearing their voice and so I will put them there... – Lawyer, JHB.

Therefore, in many ways, voting for the UDM was about giving the ANC “a wakeup call” as the party had become “complacent” and was busy defending its many scandals as opposed to serving South Africans. A discussant in the EL focus group stated that she was a staunch ANC member and served in its executive, but would not support it anymore, something she stated she was prepared to suffer for, because the ANC was no longer following the policies that it had previously fought for during the liberation struggle.

In line with Schulz-Herzernberg's (2009b) idea that voters withdrew rather than moved their support to another party, another discussant stated that she would not vote anymore, until “there's somebody who comes and says I'm going to do this, then I can see that this person is doing this and this and a change to my life.” She complained that she was tired of paying tax while living in a suburb with potholes. She also admonished the silence of the Black middle class professionals on these issues: -

There are many potholes in this area and the people are living in this area ... they are heavily taxed and we don't complain. We've got this tendency, Black people don't complain. The whites in England, if they say petrol is going up by one pound they will moan and moan and they go and protest and it won't ... up. Black people don't complain and we are suffering. We are supposed to complain - EL FG.

And secondly, why we are so quiet is because you are scared these days if you are so vocal about your views because you are going to be marginalised and put aside. You won't get tenders anymore; you won't get anything because you talk too much or you don't belong to a certain clique of people. That's why people are so quiet because they are scared of their future. If I keep quiet then I won't get this job or this tender so until people arise and speak out and say enough is enough – it will take us to arise and say it is enough and speak the truth - EL FG.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Black higher professionals in the main, sustained their support for the ANC, specifically related to the need to strengthen the strides in the economy made possible by the party. ANC sustained its support because of continued and perceived racism and exclusion of the new Black middle class in the economy. Entrepreneurs and higher professionals operating in the corporate sector complain of the slow transformation in deracialising the workplace by the ANC. For them, professionalism is utilised not as a function of maintaining monopoly over work-tasks, but as a racial disciplining measure, unlike the manner in which it is instrumentalised for crude accumulation in the public sector. Therefore, this illustrates continuities from Nzimande's (1991) findings in apartheid South Africa and reinforces Modisha's (2006) study argument of the racialised precarity African managers in the corporate sector. However, there were other BMC members that halted and fractured their support of the ANC. The first were professionals working in highly politicised state department and parastatals. Second were higher professionals, managers and entrepreneurs that were dissatisfied about the performance of the ANC.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion & Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to determine the socio-political capacity of higher professionals, entrepreneurs and managers in the Black middle class. It examined how this BMC constructs its class and professional identities and how this shapes its political attitudes.

6.2 BMC socio-political capacity

Although the theoretical and measurement differences in middle class scholarship have resulted in varied assessments of the proportion of the BMC there's broad consensus that more Black people have advanced into middle class occupations and professions. Similar to most of the arguments posed by various analysts, notably Shlemmer, 2005; Southall, 2005; Pottinger, 2008 and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b, the BMC studied herein attributes its middle class ascension and location to employment, income, debt consumption and educational qualifications that have been enabled through the application of EE and BEE policies of the ANC-led government.

The manner, mechanisms and explanatory contexts that BMC members ascribe or impose on their location and status elucidates the relationships between race, class and political attitudes. Historically, we understand that segments of the BMC during apartheid variedly supported the liberation movement or were materially co-opted and politically complacent. Post-liberation, the ANC consolidated BMC support, however, 20 years into democracy, this support is beginning to fragment. The reasons are multiple. Firstly, the findings herein illustrate that BMC support for the ANC is instrumental and sustained by its unconsolidated and precarious class position and identity, comprised of: a historical and current asset deficit; Black tax; debt and the perpetuated invisible colour bar. Fundamentally, the perpetuation of racial economic exclusion, particularly in the corporate sector reinforces BMC support for the ANC; as various groups within the BMC seek the governing party to improve its

performance on transformation of the economy. Thus, despite its cognitive assessments of the ANC's poor performance, they continue to support it.

At the same time and on the other side, higher professionals working within the state see the ANC practices of deployment as an attack on occupations, which are central to class mobility, middle class location and belonging. The perceived attack of occupational and professional spaces is, as this research has shown, significant enough to disrupt and fracture BMC support for the ANC.

Secondly, members of the upper and middle BMC fragment their support of the ANC, they are more likely to either withdraw from the electoral system or vote for an alternative Black party. The UDM and EFF, particularly the former is gaining credence with the upper and middle segments of the BMC located within the state or corporate sectors as professionals. The DA is not an option based on their perception and experiences of economic exclusion and the invisible colour bar. While still seeking to maintain the governing party's dominance, voting for alternative Black party is used as a disciplining measure of the perceived complacency, corruption and poor programmatic and policy performance of the ANC. In particular, it is the ANC's inability to address and sanction corruption within the party and state that fragments BMC support. Secondly, voting for an alternative Black party is a strategic measure aimed at maintaining a transformative agenda. That is, by voting for an alternative Black party, the BMC does not risk its class ascension and consolidation mechanisms of EE and BEE. Therefore, voting for an alternative Black party is a mechanism of putting in place checks and balances to tame the ANC's dominance and push it for better performance.

The higher professionals as a segment of the upper middle class prizes freedom of expression above participation in party political structures. It perceives the ANC as highly structured and unwilling to entertain dissent and discussion within the party. Thus they take to social media to criticise the party. There is the retrospective support for the ANC because of the EE and BEE policies, but importantly, there is also the future mobility or consolidation that sustains the BMC's support for the ANC. However, sustained political support for the ANC does not solely derive from the ANC's redistributive policies. Instead, sustained BMC support for the ANC is reinforced by the socio-economic conditions that the BMC exists within. Thus, as

discussed in Chapter 4, Black tax and high levels of consumerism - including debt consumption firstly created high levels of precarity in middle class position and secondly increased the need to consolidate middle class position. Aspirationally, the BMC's high valuation of education represents its work towards entrenching middle class position across generations. It is fair to say that class scholarship has been unable to capture the real socio-political capacity of this social group; which I think is an indictment on the South African sociological thought. This thesis has argued that decreasing BMC support for the ANC, which the ruling party has typically taken for granted, signals a far more fundamental socio-political development reflecting a repositioning of both the class and the party. First, it indicates that the BMC is becoming increasingly confident in its class position, a development allowing it to begin critically assessing the wider political landscape; second, it indicates a deeper commitment to the developmental needs of the class itself alongside those of the country as a whole.

The popular understanding that Black middle class mobility is attributable to the ANC's redistributive policies and thus beholden and dependent on the ANC limits the discussion on the BMC's role and deliverance of social and economic benefits. It bears the hallmarks of the historical debates wherein the material inclusion and class mobility of Africans under apartheid affected political attitudes towards apartheid. It is limited as it was then.

This suggests that the socio-political character of the upper and middle class is maturing, much more complicated and consolidating democracy in particular ways to the South African political economy. It follows the Rueschmeryian analysis of political character of the BMC.

6.3 Possible relationship between professional, class and political attitudes

The social and political significance of the professional Black middle class is diluted and hindered by the actions of a parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and in fact signals increasing levels of internal conflict between different elements/segments of the BMC. Black middle class has not fully realized that they are carrying the costs of poor service delivery from the ANC government, because of its greater concern for the deracialisation of the economy and workspaces. An implication of this is the

possibility that, as the BMC increases in number, its political significance may be precipitated or erupted and be realised through two sets of conflict – first conflict with the ANC for better performance, and second greater conflict with white capital – foreign and national. This is already being seen through social media feuds, where large corporates are increasingly required to respond to issues of poor service, or racialised creation of consumption.

6.4 Commercialisation of the BMC

Apart from academic attempts to quantify and establish the social and political role of the new Black middle class, other studies and news articles have focused on the commercial and consumption patterns and power of the growing Black middle class. The discourse emerging out of these studies and articles has been one of a fascination with the commercial power of the Black middle class, and ultimately resulting in the reduction of the importance of this social group to purchasing power and commercial citizenship, thus reducing its importance to commercial citizenship. The commercial and advertising sector bombards this class with what they can consume, the money thereof is financed via debt through an equally parasitic banking system. Exacerbating this, is the lag in the development outcomes of the ANC led government, that result in the Black middle class fulfilling that role, for instance by having to pay for previously white school because of the stillborn failure of the transformed Black schools.

It is possible that poorer people may aspire to education and skills for themselves and their children, in order to ascend to the middle class stratum. If it is perceived that class ascendancy results from corruption, this may also have the effect of aspiration towards that. But it may also be that more Black people will aspire to being professionals as this is a means of class ascendancy as Nzimande (1990) suggested when he was analysing the Black middle class of the 1980s. Thirdly, the framing of the Black middle class as consumer citizens, may create another understanding of the poorer classes in South Africa, which would be those that are under constant development, gaining state ‘hand-outs,’ like free water and electricity, housing and education and income in the form of grants. Thus if we have two economies – the first and the second, it would mean that we have two citizens, the consumer citizens belonging in the first economy and the welfare citizens belonging in the second economy, their commonality being consumption. An interesting question to follow up

would be: what then are the relationships that would be forged between consumer and welfare citizens, or the new Black middle class and the poor, unemployed and working classes? More importantly, would be what are the class relationships between different segments of the Black middle class?

It is important to understand, as illustrated through this research, that the combination of aspiration, Black tax, commercialization and the politicization of this particular group of society works in complex ways to sustain, rather than fracture the support for the ANC. This trend is particularly acute where BMC individuals image or perceive the lack of a political party that is aligned to its class aspiration.

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Appendix 1 - Focus group schedule

Questions/Issues for Focus Groups

1. What do you understand by the term ‘middle class’? Where does the middle class begin and where does it stop?
2. Do you identify yourself as ‘middle class’? If so, why? Is your identity based on income, occupation, education, family background, wider social status or what?
3. What was the single most important factor in determining your middle class-ness?
4. What implications does ‘middle class-ness’ have for your relations with your parents and wider family, relatives and home community?
5. What does ‘race’, your being Black, have to do with it? How does being Black relate to your being middle class? How does being Black and Middle Class determine or affect your behaviour in society?
6. What are the implications in the workplace of your being Black and middle class? Are you treated more or less favourably?
7. Are there better opportunities for Black Middle Class people in the public sector or private sector? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in either?
8. How has being Black and middle class affected where you live? Why did you choose to live where you do?
9. Do you feel secure in your middle class status? If you lost your job and income, would you still feel ‘middle class’?
10. How do you react to the following:
 - ‘I didn’t struggle to be poor’ (Smuts Ngonyama)
 - ‘There is nothing wrong with being ‘filthy rich’’ (Naledi Pandor)
 - Consumer survey depictions of Black Middle Class people as ‘Black Diamonds’
 - Media depictions of the Black middle class as being hopelessly indebted? And often corrupt?
 - Does the media give the Black middle class an unnecessarily unfair rap?

11. How does being Black and Middle Class affect your political leanings and attitudes? Does it make you more or less politically independent?
12. Is the growth of the Black Middle Class 'a good thing?' Is it good for South Africa and Democracy?

Appendix 2 - Interview schedule: Black professionals

1. What do you understand "middle class" to mean?
2. Based on your understanding, do you consider yourself a middle class person? Why/ why not?
3. What do you think your role is as a Black middle class?
4. What motivated your educational choices? (For yourself and children?)
5. What motivated your career and professional choices?
6. What is your current role in your organisation? What are the key functions embedded in this role?
What does being a professional mean to you? What type of behaviours, opinions, and activities does it encapsulate?
7. What are the understandings of professionalism in your organisation?
8. How does this idea of professionalism contribute to your organisation's execution of its programmes?
9. How does your organisation locate itself within the political sphere?
 - a. How would you describe the political identity of the place where you work?
 - b. What are the political philosophies/ideologies/ideas of the organisation?
 - c. How do people exercise/voice political ideas at work?
 - d. How do people organize themselves politically at work?
10. What assessment would you make of the current politics in South Africa? (New political parties, tenders, etc.)
11. Can you describe and define your political identity and how that came about?
 - a. How would you describe yourself politically speaking?
 - b. What political activities do you get involved in?
12. How does your political position/ideas interact with your role in the workplace?

13. Have your political ideas changed or shifted? (Factors? Probe: education, skills, work experience)
14. Do you think professionalization decreases or increases a person's political identity/activity?
15. For you to succeed in your professional sphere, what kind of political ideas and activities do you, or must you, navigate and respond to?
16. What is the relationship between being a middle class professional and a political engaged person?